OCT 16 1959

Presented to
United
Theological Seminary
Library
Dayton, Ohio

by
Bishop & Mrs. G. D. Batdorf
Dayton, Ohio

PENTECOST: A RENEWAL OF POWER

Pentecost

I The historic Event. Christianity is a historical Religion. It must submit to the tests of historic research. We need not fear result. It would have little meaning and no dynamic if it were not historic. Summarize ~~and substantiate~~ thesis. The Person of the Spirit - (Not "nature" "Office").

II A fresh & new emphasis upon the validity and power of Experience

PENTECOST:
A RENEWAL OF POWER

BY

B. H. BRUNER

LIBRARY OF
United Theological Seminary
BT
122
.B78
1928
47.937

GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & COMPANY, INC.
1928

COPYRIGHT, 1928, BY DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & COMPANY, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES AT THE COUNTRY LIFE PRESS, GARDEN CITY, N. Y.

FIRST EDITION

TO

EDNA ALICE BRUNER

Who has, in a most wonderful and inspiring way, shared with me the joys and burdens of the ministry of the Gospel for fifteen years.

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OCT 16 1959

The Bible text used in this book is taken from the American Standard Edition of the Revised Bible, copyright, 1901, by Thomas Nelson & Sons, and used by permission.

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	Introduction	ix
I.	*Pentecost: The Living Roots of Christianity*	1
II.	*The Background of Pentecost*	15
III.	*The Unity of Pentecost.* . .	33
IV.	*The Power of Pentecost* . .	57
V.	*The Preacher of Pentecost* .	75
VI.	*The Christ of Pentecost* . .	86
VII.	*The Salvation of Pentecost* .	102
VIII.	*The Aftermath of Pentecost* .	119
IX.	*Some Implications of Pentecost*	136

INTRODUCTION

The programme of the Young Men's Christian Association, which suggests that much time be spent during the next three years with the gospels in observance of the 1900th anniversary of the earthly life of our Lord, and the proposal on the part of a number of religious bodies in America to celebrate the 1900th anniversary of the Day of Pentecost in May, 1930, has given a new interest to this old subject.

Pentecost is a Greek term which means "the fiftieth." Among the Jews the term was used to designate the fiftieth day after the celebration of the great feast of the Passover. The second chapter of the book of Acts gives a rather detailed account of the first Day of Pentecost following the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The miraculous coming of the Holy Spirit, the great gospel sermon of Peter which was followed by the baptism of three thousand converts, and what many scholars look upon as the birth of the Church, all date from this Day.

Each one of the great feasts of the Jews was sup-

posed to represent some notable event in their history. "Pentecost was supposed to recall the giving of the law on Mount Sinai . . . The Feast of Pentecost was a species of harvest-home festival, and the first fruits of the harvest were offered as a part of the celebration." The list of peoples mentioned in Acts shows that representatives of nations from all over the earth came to celebrate this Feast in Jerusalem. Some scholars hold that it was as largely attended as the Feast of the Passover.

During the early centuries of Christianity the Day of Pentecost was celebrated by both the Greek Orthodox and the Old Catholic churches. It ranked with Christmas and Easter in significance. Probably more attention was given to the Day of Pentecost in the early Church than to Christmas. At a very early date in England the custom of wearing white garments and decorating the church in white on Pentecost Sunday was observed, and as a result of this the day was called Whitsunday. It is still so listed in many Church calendars. Among the larger Protestant groups very little has been made of Pentecost Sunday until in comparatively recent years. This is probably a result of the general reaction against the practices of the older Churches which followed the Reformation period.

Our interest in the studies which follow lies not in the Jewish meaning or background of Pentecost, but

in the events of the Day of Pentecost immediately following the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Our interest is in the events which centered around the Day of Pentecost which reveals the first chapter of "the history of the Church as it began its witness for Christ." In that first-century event we find a message and challenge for the Church of the Twentieth Century which its leadership cannot afford to ignore or pass over lightly.

Dr. Moffatt has this significant paragraph in his "The Approach to the New Testament" which the modern Church might well take to heart: "We can get," he says, "from the New Testament a reminder that when men become indifferent to the history of their faith they tend to become thin in conceiving or promoting its promise, and that the interests of Christianity are not served best by those who endow themselves with the title of 'prophetic' and break away from the historical base of their religion. No gain is worth the loss incurred by a wanton disparagement of the classical past. It only means that we have to go back eventually and pick up what vital traditions we have dropped. And one of the tragedies of the Churches' history is that as time passes it is increasingly difficult to recall what was once parted with so lightly. This is not a reactionary plea against experiment; it is merely a reminder that jaunty, irresponsible, indiscriminate

experiments are not countenanced by the study of the New Testament."

If this study of Pentecost seems to be a look backward, it is a look backward in the hope that we may see some things which will help us to go forward in a more intelligent and courageous way. One of my college professors said a few years ago that history serves the same purpose for the student that the mirror attached to the front of an automobile serves for the driver: it enables him to look backward while he continues to go forward. The New Testament should serve this same purpose for the leaders of the Church; enable them to look backward while they are going forward. Perhaps the Church would go forward with a great deal more speed and effectiveness to-day if it looked back more often to those days when its leadership was closer to the Risen, Living Christ.

PENTECOST: A RENEWAL OF POWER

PENTECOST: A RENEWAL OF POWER

CHAPTER I

PENTECOST: THE LIVING ROOTS OF CHRISTIANITY

In a personal letter to an American friend, written before the World War, Dr. Rudolf Eucken said: "If Christianity is to conquer the world, it must, on the one hand, return to its own living roots, and on the other, apply itself in ever-widening circles to the problems of the present time." These words are more meaningful now than they could possibly have been before the War. Any study of primitive Christianity leads us back to Pentecost, and a study of Pentecost gets us back pretty close to "the living roots" of Christianity. Any such study ought to help us in our efforts to apply the principles of Christianity in "ever-widening circles" to the problems and issues which are challenging the Christian Church, and make the dynamic of Christianity more effective in our modern world.

Our approach, in this study of the message and

challenge of Pentecost, does not follow the methods of the extreme and so-called radical school of historical criticism in dealing with the documents and text of the New Testament Scriptures. Any careful student of the New Testament is aware of the fact that this type of criticism has a legitimate field in which to work, and cannot but be mindful of the very valuable contributions which the critics have made toward our present understanding of Christianity. It is becoming increasingly clear that if Christianity claims an historical foundation at all, it must be willing to submit to the ordinary tests of historical criticism. The days surely have passed in which certain ideas of the inspiration of the Bible can preserve the New Testament from the same methods of historical criticism which are applied to other ancient literature. If we claim that the Gospels and Acts are genuine historical documents we cannot "rail them off as a sacred enclosure," forbidding the tests that are freely applied in other fields of research. But a fairly careful examination of many of the best and most recent books in English which deal with the historical Jesus and the early Church from the extreme critical point of view; a reading of the reconstructed texts of both the Gospels and Acts after all that is believed to be pure conjecture and the additions of later editors is left out; and a fair consideration of the conclusions of the men who have made

these critical observations, while it is interesting and affords splendid mental exercise, leaves one with a feeling of depression, and far from convinced.

Too much time spent in a purely critical and minute exegetical study of the New Testament is likely to leave one in a depressed mood, and is not always conducive to a healthy type of religion. Modern textual criticism is too uncertain to be satisfying. One lays down the average critical study of the gospels, in fact of any part of the New Testament, with a feeling that has been well expressed by Professor C. A. Beckwith: "If the great truths of Jesus and his religion rest upon so insecure a basis as the citation of proof texts, however well authenticated, then one must assume either a waiting or else an indifferent attitude until something capable of creating conviction is available." There is an indecisiveness in the conclusions of modern Biblical criticism, especially in the field of New Testament study, that is not at all convincing to those who have seen Christianity at work in human life and human society.

Whatever interpretation of Jesus and the early Church we shall make in this study will be after, what seems to me to be, the manner of the New Testament itself, in moral and ethical rather than theological and metaphysical terms. In the New Testament, with the exception of John's gospel and parts of Paul's letters, God is revealed not in theological terms as a

metaphysical substance, but as a person, "as a moral being whose essence is love." Jesus of Nazareth, as distinguished from the Christ of some of the books of the New Testament and some of the literature of the early Church, embodies and reveals the moral and ethical values of God, rather than the metaphysical attributes of God. In this study our interest in the words and deeds of Jesus and His early followers is not, primarily, that of the critical scholar. Rather, we are interested in the impression which the human Jesus made upon the disciples, and which the risen Lord, through the Spirit, made upon the early Christian community, as these impressions are given to us in the New Testament. Whether we have the actual words of Jesus or not, we at least have some idea of the total impression which He made upon those who saw and heard Him.

This method of approach saves us from the mood of depression which follows upon the discovery of the aridness of the average critical approach. Leaving the critical scholars to their legitimate task, ours is the more practical and perhaps more vital inquiry as to "what moral and spiritual values, first transcendently real in Jesus' own consciousness, were communicated by Him to His followers, as disclosed in the New Testament," especially in the first two chapters of Acts. We are to think not merely of the words and deeds of Jesus which have been recorded in a

book, but of those words and deeds which He "wrote down Himself in the hearts of the men around Him." If critical scholarship should discover that we do not have the record of a single utterance of Jesus which we can be sure of, we would still have the most important record of all left, those words which Jesus Himself impressed upon the hearts of His followers. We must never forget that the Church was born as a result of words written on the hearts of men, and not as the result of the written words which are recorded as those of Jesus on the pages of the New Testament.

A study of Pentecost from this point of view will, I think, help the Church to meet some of the conditions which it faces in its attempt to interpret Jesus and His message to our age. There are many currents of thought running through our age, and all of them, more or less, cut their way across the Christian message. But more dangerous than any currents of thought, than any purely intellectual atheism, is that type of living, of practical atheism which has taken possession of thousands of people both within and without the Church. The line of demarcation between the Christian and the non-Christian was never more faint and uncertain than it is in the Twentieth Century. The way in which the average Christians live now does not put them in much danger of persecution from the world. When the enemies of the Church

make their plans they generally count upon the spirit of indifference which prevails among Christians, and the willingness of many of them to compromise their religion when it is likely to interfere with business, or with social or political ambitions, as one of their most valuable assets. In other words, the Church faces the serious problem of trying to interpret the life and message of Jesus Christ to an age in which even those who are His professed followers seem absolutely unaware of the fact that He ever made any ethical and moral demands upon them. Now, there was a day in the history of Christianity when Christians were different, when to be a Christian meant to be severely persecuted at the hands of the world. A study of Pentecost, and of the time when those who professed to be disciples of Jesus Christ lived like His followers should live, ought to help the Church recapture that reality and genuineness in its message and life that alone can make it powerful in the world.

Aside from this practical atheism, there are two currents of thought, or perhaps, more properly, two movements which the Church must reckon with in a serious manner. The first may be called the revolt against dogma; the second, the growing prominence and power of the scientific method and point of view. The recent controversies in the Church have brought these two movements into prominence. The press has featured them until they have become a real and dis-

turbing element in the religious life of thousands of earnest people. The leadership of the Church cannot ignore them, and it cannot deal with them adequately without some hard and straight thinking.

The stream of Christian thought from Pentecost to the present has been a turbulent one. It has not always flowed in the same direction. An examination of the thinkers and the thought of the Church reveals two movements[1]: One from experience to dogma; the other from dogma back to experience. Sometimes Christian thought has moved in one direction; sometimes in another. In his Yale Lectures Dr. John Kelman has made a splendid study of these two movements. The Christian movement began its "long career with an impetuous eruption of white-hot enthusiasm, like a stream of molten lava from a volcano." It was born out of a great experience. As Dr. Kelman says:

"The early Christian Church sprang into being out of personal experience. Its charter may be said to be the word, 'That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the Word of life (for the life was manifest and we have seen it); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.' (1 John 1:1–3.) In their preaching the apostles appealed not to their own experience only, but to that of

[1]See "The Thinkers of the Church," by A. B. Alexander.

their hearers. Dr. Henry Ward Beecher points out that 'the apostles felt for common ground with the people whom they addressed' and he mentions the fact that the phrase, 'You all know,' or its equivalent, is repeated some forty times in the record of their propaganda. ('Lectures on Preaching.') The Church rose directly from men's experience of Jesus Christ. Its foundations were the facts of his life and death. Its inspiration was their own personal experience of His Spirit, and their sense of oneness with the life of God through Him."

But as the early Church came in contact with Greek philosophy and Roman law the movement toward dogma set in. The stream, turned in another direction, began to cool, to solidify. "Institutions, dogmas, formulas, stereotyped liturgies took the place of the primitive spiritual gifts." The revelation which was so powerful in the beginning, because it was fresh and vital, became imprisoned in words and laws and traditions. This condition prevailed for centuries. During that long period, the darkest in the history of Christianity, there were a few in every generation who knew Christianity as a great living experience. But so far as the Church as an organization was concerned, it was a period when dogma was upon the throne.

During the Reformation period the stream turned again toward experience. However, the Protestant movement soon fell a victim to many of the very

same evils which it had so ardently protested against in the beginning, and the current was turned again toward dogma. Since then the course of the stream has changed several times, and to-day we find ourselves in the midst of a tendency away from all dogma which is nothing short of a revolt. The present situation is well stated by Dr. Kelman in these words:

"The spirit of every age is determined by tendencies of thought of which it is ignorant and whose books it has not read. Without knowing why it does so, it follows these tendencies, and finds itself unable to do otherwise. Most of us have no knowledge of metaphysics, and no opportunity of acquiring such knowledge. Yet the reasoned conclusions of contemporary experts in thought become the unconscious axioms of the inexpert, the atmosphere which they breathe. It is not so much that they object to this or that particular traditional dogma, as that they are alienated from the habit of mind which frames, trusts, and lives by dogma. It is experience alone which they find convincing, and he who would build up a faith must use this method. In the region of experience he will find general consent, while in the abstract region he will find as many divergent opinions as there are men. In this region also he will be dealing with truth which is alive with impulses toward conduct, and not with purely dialectic habits of mind."

A further observation which Dr. Kelman makes shows us how different the present situation is from

that movement toward experience during the Reformation period and in the age of the Puritans. He points out the fact that the faith of the Protestant Reformers and the Puritans was "indeed experiential, and it was to their living contact with experience that they owed their power. But along with their experience they retained complete systems of highly metaphysical dogma, and they interpreted experience in terms of these." With those to whom the Church must minister to-day the case is entirely different.

"The action of their religious life is not that of reconciling their religious experience with a given and undisputed system of metaphysical theology. It has no such preconceived set of certainties to act upon. It begins with religious experience alone, and seeks to discover what theological facts are necessary to account for that experience. The system which it will thus arrive at will at the utmost contain a far simpler and a far smaller set of theological convictions than those of former days."

A study of Pentecost ought to help the Church recapture some of that white-hot enthusiasm which was born out of a great experience at the beginning of its history. This would put the Church in line with one of the most challenging movements of our modern life, and help it meet more adequately one of the deepest needs of our time. Only those elements in the

Christian religion which are expressible in and through a genuine human experience are likely to have any great influence upon an age that is in open revolt against dogma.

The emergence of the scientific method and spirit, and the prominence which has been given to scientific training in recent years, have presented a serious problem to those who would give men a satisfying interpretation of Christianity. The great creeds and dogmas of the Church, in fact the very language in which the Christian message has been presented for centuries, presupposes some acquaintance with what has been called a humanistic or classical education. The terminology of the Church has been that of the classical world rather than that of the scientific world. "The Church is the legatee of the old civilization. It is steeped in traditions which take men straight back to Greece and Rome." Our age is being trained in a scientific rather than a classical way. Science takes men into a "totally different atmosphere from that of the Church. It uses different symbols, and has even different criteria of truth." An outstanding English Churchman, Dean Inge, in speaking of the difficulties involved in an attempt to interpret the Christian message to an age of science, points out the fact that "a learned biologist may be quite at sea with such a book as John's gospel, or the epistle to the Romans," and "that the Athanasian

creed is unintelligible to anyone who knows nothing of the later Greek philosophy"; in other words, to anyone who has not had what we call a classical education. The Dean goes on to say:

"Our civilization is passing into a new phase, the scientific, and the whole framework of our Christianity belongs to the old phase, the classic or the humanistic. It is no wonder the results just at present are so discouraging. But there is no reason to be despondent or lose faith. Only, we churchmen ought to understand what is happening and to keep our eyes open; yes, and to keep them fixed on the future rather than on the past. We all know what happened to Lot's wife. The arid deserts of theological controversy are strewn with these melancholy monuments. What the Church needs is not to adhere universally to the decisions of the seven General Councils, but to attempt a far more difficult task, that of restating Christian truth in terms of the studies which will more and more become the staples of education. . . ."

"Remember that the new knowledge has as good a right to hear and speak in its own tongue the wonderful works of God as the educated Christian in the fourth and fifth centuries had to formulate the Christian faith in terms of the neo-Platonic philosophy . . . What philosophy was then, science is now. We need a great constructive work of Christian theology which shall make the faith intelligible and satisfying to those whose education has been of the modern type. . . . The unwisdom of trying to silence or crush honest attempts in this direction by the heavy hand

of authority ought to be apparent to all. The modern man wants to be Christian, he wants to hear the real gospel of Christ from the pulpit, but he must hear it in the tongue wherein he was born, and not in the tongue of fifteen hundred years ago. There is no Scripture against putting old wine in new bottles."[2]

The president of an outstanding American College[3] said recently in a public address:

"There are three times as many junior and senior youth in the high schools and colleges to-day as there were ten years ago. Textbooks are written from the scientific point of view, teachers breathe the scientific spirit. The professional appeal is to the laboratory for final decisions. It is obvious, therefore, that the youth whose brain cells are thus moulded will approach the Bible in the same spirit and subject the Church to the same scientific test. This is the spirit of our age. It cannot be turned back. To know the unknown is the curriculum that must be covered before we shall know as we are known. The increasing demand for knowledge has the surge of tidal waves. . . . If the Church is inhospitable to the scientific spirit she will lose the youth and ostracize herself. The youth demands that God in nature and God in revelation speak the same language and that the method of God in revelation shall not deny the processes of His own hand in building rocks and stars. Our science, therefore, must become increasingly re-

[2]Sermon in the *Boston Transcript.*

[3]A. D. Harmon, Transylvania College, Lexington, Ky.

ligious, and our religion must become increasingly scientific. Whenever faith hesitates to walk with science in laboratory, field, and garden it puts God on the defensive in the presence of His own handiwork. There is nothing to be feared from science except the fear of science. The finest faith rests on the top end of the most perfect knowledge. God has always shown preference to the man who knows. He has never chosen an ignoramus as the spokesman of His major prophecies nor made an ignorant people the repository of His holy oracles."

Science has been defined as "a passion for facts." The early Church was born out of a great experience that was based upon facts. The Day of Pentecost and the Church that began to be on that day are actual facts of history. A study of Pentecost and the facts upon which this early Christian experience rested ought to help the Church of our age do the thing which must be done if her message is to be effective at all—give those who are scientifically trained a religion based upon facts and stated in terms they can understand.

Three characteristics of today 11/4/29
I The desire to Experience and
away from dogma
II Humanistic interpretation of life
and the universe — Inadequate!
III Scientific method and point of view
Theology & Religion must be stated to
in terms of the scientific conceptions

CHAPTER II

THE BACKGROUND OF PENTECOST

We cannot understand Pentecost unless we understand some of the things which preceded it. The opening chapters of Acts give us a portrait of a group of men who had been followers of Jesus of Nazareth. At His death they had left Him. Then something happened that brought them together in Jerusalem. This something was the resurrection of their leader from the dead. These men who had seen their last hope go with the death of Jesus and who had run away for fear of the authorities, had become convinced that the same Jesus whom they had followed in the flesh had actually come forth from the tomb. They had seen Him, they had talked with Him, they had broken bread with Him, they knew Him. In Jerusalem they had seen Him for the last time, but He had left them with a promise that continued to ring in their ears and which filled their souls with a great expectancy. The ascension was a sign to these men of a spiritual fact, of which they were absolutely convinced, that henceforth Jesus was alive with God.

Three facts of tremendous importance stand out

as the background of Pentecost: Jesus lived; Jesus died on the cross at the hands of His enemies; Jesus came forth from the tomb on the third day. The disciples were absolutely sure of these three facts. No one can read the records and doubt it. They had lived with Jesus for three years. They had seen Him arrested, and at least some of them had seen Him die and knew where He was buried. They had all seen Him after His resurrection. They did not debate about any of these facts; they simply stated them and staked their lives upon them.

These are the three supreme facts of the Christian religion: Jesus lived; Jesus died; Jesus lived again. These three facts had begun to turn the world upside-down before any of them were recorded in a book. They were written down in a book only because they had become the dominant and outstanding facts upon which the early Christian community was founded, and the source of its conquering power. The Christian Church stands or falls upon these three facts.

Jesus lived. The foundation of our faith and of the Christian Church rests upon an actual historical character and not upon an ideal or a myth. The tendency of the more radical school of criticism in recent years has been toward the utter negation of the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth. Professor Schmiedel says: "The view that Jesus never lived has gained an ever-growing number of supporters." He also says:

"My inmost religious convictions would suffer no harm, even if I now felt obliged to conclude that Jesus never lived." The argument is, that so long as we have the ideal, nothing else really matters. In an article in *The Homiletic Review* a few years ago there is a splendid statement by the Rev. Chas. H. Hodgson of some of the implications involved in accepting the view that Jesus never actually lived.

"If this position could be accepted," he says, "it would be a great relief to those who are sorely tried by the continuous controversies about the details of history, but it is beset by too many difficulties. First of all, it would mean that the Apostles, and after them the whole Christian Church, had built upon a false foundation. Admitting that there are little actual historical data in the Pauline epistles, there is yet sufficient to make it evident that the apostle regarded his faith as being grounded in an historical person. 1 Cor. 15:3-8 is a host in itself, for therein Paul gives us the continuous theme of his preaching. Again in the same epistle he expressly says that 'other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.' If it is said that he is writing of an ideal, then let it be remembered that Jesus was 'according to the flesh,' 'born of woman'; that he had a brother James whom Paul had met, and had disciples whom Paul also knew. In the face of such testimony it is idle to suggest anything short of an historical person as the basis of Paul's faith.

"The same may be said of John. We may grant

that his writings are largely subjective, yet the opening sentences both of the gospel and the first epistle make it clear that there was an objective reality in mind all the time. There can be no serious doubt that the Christianity of the Apostles, as well as the Church ever since, 'sinks or swims with the assertion that at a certain period of time a human personality appeared on the stage of history and was the incarnate Son of God.' Secondly, a Christianity divorced from Jesus Christ would soon cease to be an effective regenerating power. It may seem an easy thing to us with our idea of Christianity to let go the facts, but we should soon find that to maintain our ideas we need the facts of history. Faith and facts are both essential for the maintenance of religion. The former without the latter would be mere philosophy; the latter without the former mere history. The efficacy of Christianity lies in its dynamic, and its dynamic is not its ideas but its facts concerning Jesus. The ideas may be beautiful, they may appeal to the esthetic sense of the few, but for the many the ideas must be made actual before they can be made effective. George Eliot summed up the truth in these words: 'Ideas are poor ghosts . . . they cannot make themselves felt. But sometimes they are made flesh . . . then their presence is a power, then they shake us like passion, and we are drawn after them with gentle compulsion as flame is drawn to flame.'"

In this same article the following paragraph is quoted from Dr. James Denney, showing that the gospel story is its own best evidence and defence:

"A life of such perfect trust in God, such wonderful love to God and man—a life that by its very mass attracts to itself so irresistibly all feeble lives that have the faintest affinity with it, or capacity for it—a life that gathers into its own deep and powerful stream all souls in search of God, and bears them on to the salvation they seek! What could be more idle than to speak of such a life as unhistorical or unreal?"

The story of Pentecost would be a meaningless jumble of words against a background in which Jesus never lived. The Christian Church can never stand for long upon a foundation from which the historical Jesus has been removed. Take from Christianity "its majestic and loving figure of Jesus, and you not only change its character, but you make it absolutely powerless to affect human life in any great way." Jesus lived: it is against the background of this historic fact that we must interpret Pentecost, and it is upon this primary fact that the Church stands and must continue to stand.

Jesus died. The disciples were absolutely convinced of this fact. Some of them saw him hanging on the cross and in all probability most of them knew where he was buried. His death left them scattered and afraid. The burden of their first message to the world was the death of Jesus—how He had been killed by wicked men. The death of Jesus has always been one of the central facts of Christianity. It is the con-

viction of all the writers of the New Testament that Jesus died and that in some way in His death, "God has dealt effectively with the world's sin for its removal." One of the most illuminating and exhaustive studies of the death of Christ is that written by Dr. James Denney.[4] One cannot agree with all of Dr. Denney's theological conclusions, or with his interpretations of many of the most important passages connected with the death of Jesus; but in no other book, perhaps, is there a more splendid grouping of the sayings of Jesus and those of the writers of the New Testament about His death. No study of the death of Jesus is complete without an examination of Dr. Denney's great work.

The cross of Jesus has been the centre of the fiercest debates and conflicts in the Church. Around it the theologians have marshalled their forces, and at its foot the historic creeds and dogmas of the Church have been formulated. The doctrine of the atonement undoubtedly holds first place in the discussions of Christian scholars in every century since Jesus lived. And yet most of these discussions, as well as most of the theories of the death of Jesus which they have evolved, leaves our modern world unmoved. In these discussions and theories "the root-idea in the atonement has been expressed for the most part in legal and juridical language—the payment of a debt, the satis-

[4] "The Death of Christ."

faction of justice, the bearing of a penalty—these are but a few typical phrases in immemorial use in stating the nature of the divine sacrifice offered for us on Calvary by the Eternal Son. . . . There are not wanting serious signs that the old juridical language fails to appeal as it did once to the spiritual consciousness of a large section of Christian believers. It sounds artificial; it stands aloof from the dominant ideas of the times; there is not a little in it which shocks the moral sense of many devout minds that are earnestly desirous of arriving at something like a consistent theory of the atonement. The result is widespread unrest and unhappiness, loss of conviction and emphasis in speaking and thinking on this great theme and failure to lay hold with vivid conviction of the fact of the cross itself."

We have no hint that those men who had been with Jesus and who had followed Him when "he set his face steadfastly to go up to Jerusalem" and to death, ever thought of such theories of His death as those which later became the accepted dogmas of the Church. It is surprising how wide a difference there is between the gospel that Jesus preached about His coming death and the traditional gospel of the Church concerning that death.[5] It was the fact of Jesus' death and not any special interpretation of that death which influenced the early Church so

[5]See "The Gospel That Jesus Preached," by Cadoux.

profoundly. That Jesus suffered, that in some way He gave Himself as a ransom, as God's offer of love and forgiveness toward sinful men, and that in a very real way men were reconciled to God through that death, the early Christians were sure. But there is very little, if any, evidence that they thought of Jesus as a victim sacrificed to appease the wrath of an angry God, or to buy the souls of men from the devil. Most of these theories which have been at the heart of the traditional gospel, and which men are repudiating as they approach a better understanding of Jesus Himself, originated on this side of Pentecost.

In the cross the early disciples of Jesus saw the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the willingness of their Master to die for men, and the infinite love of a Suffering God. Whatever our interpretations may be, in the cross we have the fact upon which our whole gospel of redemption must rest. While I do not agree with Dr. P. T. Forsyth in all of his interpretations of the death of Jesus in his Yale Lectures ("Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind") or in his other great book, "The Cruciality of the Cross," this paragraph is vital:

"Any gospel that ignores the cross and its relation to sin, is unfit to cope with the actual moral case of the world, its giant souls and hearty sinners. We cannot deal to any purpose with the great sins or the great fearless transgressors, the exceeding sinfulness and

deep damnation of the race. . . . Without the message of the cross our word is a very lovely song of one that has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument. And the people hear, but do not. They hear, but do not fear. They are enchanted, but unchanged. Moral taste takes the place of moral insight. Religious sensibility stands where evangelical faith ought to be. Education takes the place of conversion, a happy nature of the new nature. Love takes the place of faith, uneasiness of concern, regret of repentance, and criticism of judgment. Sin becomes a thing of short weight."

It is the fact of the death of Jesus on the cross as the revelation of the extremes to which sin will drive men, and of the limit to which God in Christ was willing to go to save men from that sin, and not any of the artificial and antiquated theories about that death, that the Church needs to grasp to-day and present as the basis of its gospel of redemption. We need to see, as the late Lyman Abbott saw, that "sin not only fills to the brim the cup of him who indulges in it, not only presses a cup of even greater bitterness to the lips of every loving and Christlike soul who longs and strives to deliver his brother from the poisoned chalice, but it brings suffering upon the heart of the infinite and loving God, who is Himself able to save His children from their self-destruction only by His own suffering of their self-inflicted penalty. This is the gospel. And history proves it a far

more effective message for the redemption of mankind than any message of law and penalty, however qualified and ameliorated by a message of mercy purchased only by sacrifice offered by the sinner or on his behalf to an angry God, hard to be entreated."[6]

In a fresh and interesting discussion of the various theories of the death of Jesus, Dr. George Stewart suggests that what might well be called "the reconciliation theory" satisfies those who in our day are seeking an answer to the meaning of the cross. "The Scriptures represent Jesus," he says, "not as appeasing an angry God, but as reconciling unwilling and wayward men to God. 'Be ye reconciled to God.' 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.' 'If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.' The word 'atonement' occurs but once in the New Testament. Everywhere else the word 'reconcile' is used, a word which means the restoration of a personal intimate relationship which has been interrupted by wrongdoing." The Church cannot go far wrong in staying by this simple interpretation of the fact of the death of Jesus upon the cross.

Jesus came forth from the tomb. All the gospels tell of the empty grave. They differ slightly as to the

[6] In "What Christianity Means to Me," Lyman Abbott.

details of what happened on the resurrection morning; but regarding the fact of the resurrection they are all agreed. The best New Testament scholars are agreed that Christianity, as we have it to-day, is based upon the faith of those early disciples concerning the reality of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. It was the fact of the resurrection that gave Jesus' death such tremendous significance among the disciples and the early Christians in general. It is well for us to remember that what we are able to see as the meaning and results of Jesus' death was not evident to the disciples at the time of His death. All that the death of Jesus meant to the disciples came as a result of this other fact—the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

No one can read the simple, straightforward accounts of the resurrection in the four gospels without being profoundly impressed. Jesus is spoken of as having risen from the dead in a real objective sense. He was something more to the men who gave us the sources for these stories than a disembodied spirit. Standing in the midst of the disciples, seeing the look of fright and terror on their faces, and perceiving that they thought Him to be only a spirit, we are told by Luke how Jesus reassured them with these words, "See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye behold me having." And John reports

this significant saying directed to Thomas the most doubtful of all the disciples, "Reach hither thy finger and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side," which the risen Lord evidently intended as proof of His personal identity and His corporeal reality.

The editor of *The Christian Evangelist* quotes this sentiment expressed by Dr. George A. Buttrick in his Easter sermon for 1927:

"The New Testament has no note of 'In Memoriam.' It is filled with the sense of a risen Christ. . . . 'In Memoriam' is one of the noblest arguments for immortality ever written, but it is human reason. Tennyson makes out a most probable satisfying case. But the New Testament does not argue; it presents facts, the fact of the risen Lord. Let us hold to that. Belief in the resurrection is not based upon an inference but upon a fact. The writers of the New Testament do not speak of the resurrection in the subjunctive mood. They say: 'Now is Christ risen from the dead.'"

Much discussion has centred around the question of the nature of the resurrection body of Jesus. There are many evidences that this body was not exactly like the body He had known before His death. He was able to come and go at will; to enter closed doors; and to appear to some of the disciples and talk with them on the road without being recognized. On this

point Milligan, in his "Resurrection of Our Lord," says: "He no longer accompanied His disciples as He had been wont to do on their journeys, but sent them forth alone and met them at the close. . . . And when He came in contact with them there was a mysteriousness in His bearing, and a reserve in His manifestation of Himself very different from what had been exhibited by Him during His previous life." However, as Dr. E. Griffith-John suggests, "There is abundant evidence of the impression of both identity and corporeality in the resurrection body of Jesus; so that His disciples, *i. e.:* those who knew him best, and could not possibly be deceived by any fancied resemblance between him and a pretender who might have personified him, were left in no manner of doubt that he was that Jesus whom they had known and loved during his earthly life."

However this discussion about the resurrection body of Jesus may be settled, the fact which for me is the supreme evidence of the resurrection of Jesus, is the impression which the event made upon the lives of His followers. And do not forget that this is the only evidence that preceded Pentecost. All the statements concerning the resurrection, including those of Paul which by many scholars are considered as the most convincing, which we have in the New Testament were written long after Pentecost. They come as one of the results of Pentecost, rather

than one of the causes of Pentecost. This early evidence is the most convincing. All who have studied primitive Christianity have been struck with this fact—the marvellous change which the resurrection made in the life and faith of the disciples. There is no evidence that they were looking for it, and that they were simply believing something which they wanted to believe when it was reported that Jesus was risen. Every one of the disciples had to be convinced of the fact of the resurrection. These men who had followed Jesus for something like three years with high hopes of the wonderful things He would do for their nation, and with their own political welfare in mind, were terrified and stunned at His death. A recent article thus strikingly portrays the disciples as they appeared after the death of Jesus:

"The blow was all the more crushing because it had been struck by the recognized religious leaders of the nation and with the full authority of Rome. Darkness that penetrated their very souls closed in upon them. They who had been so dependent upon their Master were left leaderless. Gloom impenetrable and woe unutterable took possession of them. And with the darkness came fear. Like hunted animals they fled, as the oldest account implies, back to their old haunts in Galilee. There, apparently for a brief time, they resumed their former occupation. For the moment they must have seemed to themselves like men who had followed a glorious star over the hills and

valleys and through the trackless wastes, until suddenly it had vanished and they were left in darkness."

But in a short time all this was changed. Those men who were dismayed at the death of their leader and who were afraid to face the world, were absolutely and completely transformed. The timid and the cowardly became the bold and the courageous. They go by the same names as they did before the resurrection, but they were not the same men. Not only were their lives changed—they had a different faith. They did not preach a dead Jesus. Their faith was in a risen, glorified Lord, who had been exalted to the right hand of God. How are we to explain the changed life and faith of these men? They accounted for it by the fact of the resurrection of their Master from the dead. They who had lost hope, who had turned in disappointment to their old vocations, were startled into a new life and came into possession of a new and transforming faith by the appearance in their midst of one whom they had believed to be dead; one whom, according to all the ordinary tests of human experience, they actually knew to be dead. They saw Him, they heard Him, they talked with Him, they ate with Him, they knew that He was indeed risen. There is no miracle in the Bible comparable to this miracle of the changed life and faith of Jesus' disciples after His resurrection. There is no

greater evidence than this that the resurrection of Jesus is an established fact of history, and one of the supreme facts of our faith.

Pentecost came to a group of men who were sure of these three facts: Jesus lived; Jesus died; Jesus lived again. They had heard the promise of the risen Lord, "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you," and in the faith that this power would come, and in an expectant attitude, they waited in Jerusalem. Pentecost came to a group of believing and expectant men.

Pentecost will come again to a believing and expectant Church. When the Church believes in a vital rather than a merely formal way, and makes central in its thought and message these three facts—Jesus lived; Jesus died; Jesus lived again—and all the implications of these facts; when it becomes sure of these three facts and is willing to stake as much upon them as the early Christians were, then it may look for a new birth. And when the Church moves out of an atmosphere of uncertainty and doubt, and often downright pessimisim, into an atmosphere of real expectancy, it will be in a position to receive the power which the risen Lord has for it.

Just here the Church of our day presents a real challenge to its leadership. In one of Stevenson's stories there is a chapter which describes a ship battling with a storm and in danger of being cast

upon the rocks. The frightened passengers are in the cabin, many of them in tears. Their mood is that of doubt and utter despair for they are sure the ship is doomed. The captain has given orders that no one shall go on deck. One man, who is a little more daring than the rest, disobeys orders. He leaves the cabin and fights his way across the storm-swept decks in the direction of the pilot house. He cannot reach it but he gets close enough to see the pilot turning the ship safely away from the rocks. The pilot sees the passenger, and though speech is vain because of the roar of the storm, smiles into his ashen face. Then the man turns and fights his way through the storm again back to the cabin. He stands in the midst of those fearful souls with this word of hope: "I have seen the pilot. He smiled, and all is well!" And immediately doubt was changed into expectancy, and dismay and terror into a song of joy.

This is an age when the leadership of the Church ought to be as sure of Jesus Christ—that he lived, and died, and lives again—as the leaders of the early Church were. And yet, many observations would lead us to believe that too many of our religious leaders are in the cabin to-day encouraging rather than trying to quell the fears of the people. They are ministering to that mood of doubt and depression and fearfulness which is making the Church powerless in so many of its undertakings, rather than lead-

ing it out into an attitude of expectancy and hope. The place for any religious leadership that is at all worthy the name is out on the deck seeking a glimpse of the Pilot's face. The Church needs a leadership which is brave enough to battle its way across the storm-swept decks of modern life, and which is intelligent enough to think its way through the problems which are troubling and terrorizing the souls of men, until it can see the face of Him who said one time in the midst of a terrible storm, "It is I, be not afraid!" When we have a leadership that has seen the Pilot smile, that has become so sure of Jesus that it knows the Church that bears His name is not bound for the rocks, but for the open sea of new discoveries of His power and new conquests for His Kingdom—then, and not until then, may we expect Pentecost to come again!

CHAPTER III

THE UNITY OF PENTECOST

In our last study we observed that Pentecost came to a group of men who believed that Jesus lived, that Jesus died, and that Jesus lived again. These men were sure enough of these three facts that they were willing to stake their lives upon their faith. We also observed that with this great faith in their hearts, a faith based upon an experience of actual contact with the Living Christ, these men waited in an attitude of expectancy for the coming of the power which the ascended Lord had promised. In the first two chapters of Acts we make this further observation, that Pentecost came to a group of men who were *united* in their common faith and expectancy. It was not simply an individual matter with them. "These all with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer . . . And when the day of Pentecost was now fully come, they were all together in one place." Dr. Erdman says: "Taking them all in all, the persons who composed this group were of humble station, of modest means, and of moderate ability, yet, united and empowered by the Spirit of Christ,

they formed the most important society and achieved the most notable work in the history of the world."

The fact of supreme importance here is that during the period between the ascension of Jesus and the coming of power on Pentecost, the disciples were united. For that brief period, at least, the prayer of Jesus was answered. And this unity which preceded Pentecost was not a unity based upon any man, any creed, or any method or plan of organization. It was a unity based upon a common faith in one whom the disciples had come to look upon as being more than man. It was a unity that had as its centre and its foundation and its inspiration the Risen Christ Himself. There was just one supreme element in the Unity of Pentecost and that was Jesus Christ Himself.

There are a few insistent and urgent voices in the long history of the Christian Church which have never been silenced for any very long period of time. Among these are those voices that have pleaded for a unity of the followers of Jesus Christ which shall at least approximate that of the early disciples. A few years before the World War Bishop Boyd Carpenter, the Dean of Durham, attended a conference in America in the interest of Christian Unity. At this conference he is reported to have given rather "startling expression to the conviction that, unless the Churches ceased preaching their divisive, secta-

rian issues, their baptisms and apostolic successions, and addressed themselves to the holy task of binding the nations together in the bond of brotherhood, some great calamity would befall Europe and the world." About the same time, Dr. Henry Van Dyke, a noted American churchman, is reported to have expressed the following sentiments about the divided state of the Church:

"What trials and delays must be endured, what obstacles and difficulties overcome, what long and perilous journeys accomplished, before the United Church is reached, God only knows. It may be that the conflict with evil must grow sharper and more bitter before Christians learn that division means defeat. It may be that the shame of forsaken temples and a vanishing Sabbath must grow deeper to make us see the consequences of rivalry. It may be that disaster and humiliation and weakness must befall the Christian forces, that they must be driven to some dreadful battlefield of Armageddon to make them stand together against the united powers of darkness and unbelief."

The Great Calamity came to a world and a Church which were totally unprepared for it. It came in the very hour when the leaders of the Church and the nations were saying that it could never happen. And on that dreadful "battlefield of Armageddon," the Church realized as it had never realized before

the glaring sin which had silenced its voice of protest against international strife, and the imperativeness of a closer unity to meet the moral and spiritual needs of the crisis. Now that more than a decade has passed since that Pentecost of calamity was poured out upon the world, those voices pleading for a United Church are more insistent than ever. The most far-sighted statesmen in the Kingdom of God are mapping out their plans for future achievement and conquest along the lines of a Christian community that shall be radically different from that one in which the World War became a possibility. The most vital and practical contribution that any man or group of men can make toward the future progress of the Kingdom of God is something that will point the way toward the unity of all Christians. Before men can rear the superstructures of their magnificent temples which they erect to the gods of finance, business, and commerce, they are often forced to tear down and clear away old structures and lay sure foundations. The old structures of a divided Church must be cleared away along with the forces which hold them together, and adequate foundation material for such a superstructure as the United Church of Jesus Christ must be discovered. Before we can ever hope to have unity we must recognize clearly just what is in the way of unity, and we must come to a clear understanding about foundation material.

Perhaps this is the greatest contribution the Lausanne Conference on Faith and Order has made to the Christian world. Unity as a concrete fact did not make much headway at this conference, judged from the reports which have been published. But those who have written of their impressions of the Lausanne meeting unite in saying that the whole Christian world now knows what is in the way of unity, and that a good beginning has been made in the selection of that foundation material upon which a United Church of Jesus Christ can stand and stand permanently.

Three of the gospel writers give an account of the transfiguration of Jesus. On the mountain where this transfiguration took place one of the disciples who had accompanied Jesus was so impressed with all that had happened—the glory of his Master as His face shone, and the presence of Moses and Elijah—that he wanted to do what men have always been impelled to do under the influence of a high religious emotion—build altars. But something was yet to happen on that mountain-top which profoundly changed Peter's conception of his Master. "A bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them and said, Arise, and

be not afraid. And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, save Jesus only." At the Transfiguration all men, no matter how important they had been in the history of God's dealing with the race, faded out of the picture and the disciples saw Jesus only standing in their midst. After that we hear nothing more from Peter about erecting altars to men.

The men who followed Jesus up to Jerusalem for the last time had staked all their hopes on "Jesus only." After the resurrection the disciples saw no man save "Jesus only." The record of the primitive Christian community is that of the lives of men and women who saw no man save "Jesus only" and who recognized Him as the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. The apostolic preaching was in the name of Jesus. It was not presented to the world by the authority of men. The preachers were men who had been laid hold of by the Living Christ, and not men who were given authority to preach by some organization. When the apostles were questioned about their ministry of healing they gave all the credit to Jesus and claimed nothing for any man. The first day of the week was set aside as the special day of worship in the early Church because it commemorated the resurrection of Jesus. In the two ordinances which were universally practised among the early Christians, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, no man was honored but "Jesus

only." The one was the symbol of His death, burial, and resurrection; the other a memorial feast of communion and fellowship in His honor. It was in the name of Jesus that the disciples proclaimed salvation for the whole world and not in the name of any man. The members of the early Christian community were known as Disciples, Brethren in a common cause, and Christians, and not as the followers of any man save "Jesus only." So far as we can learn they recognized "Jesus only" as the foundation upon which the Church rested, and as the head of that Church, which was His body, and His word as they remembered it or as the Holy Spirit brought it to their remembrance, as their only source of authority. These early disciples counted it an honour to be called Christians and they were glad to suffer for the sake of wearing Christ's name to the exclusion of all other names. "Jesus only" was the foundation upon which the first Christian community or Church was built and the bond of unity which held it together and made it powerful in its witness for him.

We do not know just how long this unity of Pentecost and of the early Christian community prevailed. There is plenty of evidence in the later chapters of Acts and in Paul's letters that the divisive forces began to do their work at an early date. Division began to take the place of unity when the

disciples lost sight of the centrality of Jesus in their message and organization and began to erect altars to men. Paul saw the danger of the divisive forces which were entering the life of the Church and warned the Christians in Corinth against them: "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them that are of the household of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" Paul lays his finger immediately upon the source of the division at Corinth—it centred in men. Paul, Apollos, Cephas—division began in the early Church when the disciples sought to exalt these names to a place of equal importance with that of Jesus Christ.

Men who have been exalted to places of power and authority in the Church, or who have assumed that power and authority for themselves, are responsible for the divided Church. When men began to usurp the place which Jesus held as the head of the Church, they began to build organizations which did not rest

upon Christian foundations. Among the early disciples the term "bishop" or "elder" was used to designate the men who were appointed to look after the spiritual affairs of the local congregation. When men took over this title and assumed the oversight of many churches, they began to depart from the earliest practice. In the New Testament we read of "bishops" in the local churches, but never of a "bishop" over all the churches. When we begin to read in Church History of "bishops" who had charge over many churches, and who vied with one another for supremacy over the whole Church, we are in that period when the first great lines of cleavage which divided the Church were marked out.

All that has been divisive in the long history of the Church and that has caused sectarianism to thrive, has been man-made. Divisive interpretations of the ordinances; holy orders in the ministry; forms of Church government; party names; ways of doing missionary and benevolent work; all those things over which men and churches have divided have been man-made. At the centre of every great controversy in the history of the Church there have been a few outstanding personalities who have either been exalted by others, or who have exalted themselves above Jesus Christ. When men take the centre of the picture, when they seek to direct the worship and the work of the Church from altars

which bear the name of some man or of some method of organization rather than the name of Christ; when men set themselves up, or are exalted by others to places of power and authority in the Church which the New Testament does not recognize, the Church is divided and Christ, its only head, is put to open shame.

The barriers in the way of a United Church of Jesus Christ in our day are many, but the two greatest barriers are men and words. Until Lausanne we had thought that the barriers to unity were not so much doctrinal and creedal as human and personal, and that the scholarship of the Church was never more united upon the essentials of our faith than it is to-day. But at Lausanne the doctrinal and creedal differences were uppermost, and they were defended by men who hold official positions in the great creedal and sacramental Churches, and who, from the reports of the Conference, did not express any willingness to give up any of their power or authority for the sake of unity. The barrier of flesh and blood in official positions in the great Churches, and the barrier of creeds in which the vital message of Christianity is imprisoned in words which have long since lost their meaning for our age—these stand in the way of unity to-day. The Church is divided because men still insist upon maintaining those altars which have been erected to the honour of men, and in

perpetuating an order of things in which the authority of men and creeds is of more importance than the authority of Jesus Christ Himself. People still boast of their party names just as if they had never read Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Men who are in places of power and authority in man-made churches are exceedingly jealous of that power and authority. I do not remember reading, even in the reports of Lausanne, of the Bishops, or of the high officials in any of our religious bodies in our divided Protestantism, getting together and signing a solemn pact to the effect that they are willing to give up their power and authority, or their allegiance to party names or the denominational order of things, for the sake of the unity of the Church. It is about time we faced the facts, which are simply these—that men who have risen to places of power and authority in the divided Church are unwilling to relinquish any of that power for the sake of a United Church. Until some of these men are willing to get out of the way so that the Church may see "Jesus only," the world at large will continue to look upon our Christian Unity Conferences and the utterances which come from them as the hypocrisy of men who are willing to talk but not to act. Men can talk Christian Unity and continue to hold their places of power and authority; when they begin to act, somebody will be out of a job.

The way of unity for the Church of Jesus Christ leads back toward Pentecost rather than Nicea. In his impressions of Lausanne, Dr. Adolf Keller of Zurich said: "The Lausanne Conference was hailing the dawn of a new ecumenical theology slowly rising above confessional and denominational theology, which may, still for a long time, enlighten the ecclesiastical valley in which each single Church is at home. But from the heights above this valley a theology becomes visible, still far away, which tries to be simply Christian, not Lutheran or Presbyterian or Methodist or Anglican, or that of any other denomination." That new theology which is "simply Christian" will not be found until we get back to Pentecost. There was much, very much at Lausanne which gives hope to the prophets of a United Church, but there was one tragedy which the Christian world cannot forget—the fact that the delegates to that great gathering could not sit down together around the Lord's table to celebrate the Lord's Supper. The Bishop of Upsala, Sweden, voices his impressions of this tragedy in a poignant paragraph:

"One thing has, I hope, become clear to every member of the Conference: What is the great problem? There is in some parts a tendency to hide or forget or put aside the problem in taking up all kinds of secondary things and questions of doctrine and organization. That problem is the biggest scandal

in the Church to-day. Christ invites us all to His table. The Lord's Supper should be the innermost point of unity for all Christians. There we should all meet in adoration in receiving the Divine gift. There we should all meet in the central mystery of salvation and fellowship with our Divine Master and be equal one with another. There is no more hideous caricature of Christianity and the Church than that scandalous fact that we cannot all go to the same table of our Lord. I would say as long as that scandal lasts the table is not the table of our Lord, but the table of some human lords, rivalizing with each other in a competition absurd and sacrilegious. It is quite true, as the bishop of Gloucester has told us, that we can unite in worship without being able to explain in the same manner the Divine mystery. Here is the problem. It cannot be solved by hasty measures. But it must be faced. All talk about a United Church is shallow and empty as long as we do not set our prayers and endeavours in order to have fellowship at the Lord's Table. When this visible fellowship in the Holy Communion is a reality, then the question of a United Church can be treated not as a speculation only, but as a reality to be won."

The barriers which keep men from coming together around the Lord's table have all been erected since Pentecost, and by men. The delegates to the Lausanne Conference failed in their attempt to come together around the Lord's table because in that Conference, notable and important as it was, they did not

get back beyond Nicea. The thing which the bishop of Upsala longs for, and which the whole Christian world is longing for, cannot happen until the representatives of the Churches get back beyond Nicea to Pentecost. And the question of a United Church can never be treated as anything more than a speculation until we do get back that far. There were no barriers at Pentecost which kept the disciples of Jesus Christ from celebrating the Lord's Supper together as brethren. Nothing can ever bring the disciples of Jesus Christ in our age together in that bond of unity which preceded Pentecost and which manifested itself in the early Church except a personal experience of "Jesus only." Unity will not come to this age or any age through a Christ "defined in words, or acknowledged in creeds, served in rites, ceremonies, sacraments, or ordinances," but through a Christ who is as real in the experiences of men as Jesus was to those men who waited for the power of Pentecost. All that has been done in the Church that is un-Christian and which has utterly denied the spirit of Jesus Christ, has been done to defend and perpetuate that which is purely man-made, and not in honour of Christ Himself. When the motive is that of love and loyalty to "Jesus only," men do not do un-Christian things in the name of the Church. The way toward any permanent and sufficient unity for all Christians must be the way

that leads to some new Mount of Transfiguration on which all men with their ecclesiastical titles and trappings will fade out of the picture and the Church will see no man save "Jesus only." There is only one foundation that can ever support the superstructure of a United Church, and that is Jesus Christ Himself. This is where the unity of Pentecost centred. Jesus Christ must be over all, in all, and under all. Party names, creeds, doctrines, however sacred and important they may have been for the age in which they came into being, are, in the light of the needs and the viewpoints of our age, divisive, and they cannot, at least in their present form, be used as foundation material for the United Church.

One of the most significant movements toward unity to-day is the Youth Movement, and it points back toward the unity of Pentecost. Youth is leading the Church to a new Mount of Transfiguration, and on that mountain-top they will see no man save "Jesus only." Dr. Walter W. Van Kirk, in a splendid volume,[7] has brought together the sentiments, ideals, and proposals of the youth of America and of the world which look toward a United Church. The ideal of a United Church, he points out, has challenged the youth of our generation, until they "have set their faces toward the dawn of a new era

[7] "Youth and Christian Unity."

in the history of organized Christianity." Dr. Van Kirk finds that all the proposals of youth point back toward "Jesus only" and the early Christian community. The following paragraphs are vital and full of hope:

"In building this Church of to-morrow these young people take a long look into the past. They do not stop with Luther, nor with Huss, nor with Arnold of Brescia, nor with Saint Francis, nor with Augustine, nor with Athanasius. They are not satisfied to linger within the shadow of the brilliant age that produced such brilliant men as Cyprian, Tertullian, Origen, and Polycarp. Our young people in their devotion to the Church insist on going back to Jesus Himself. Their theology, their attitude toward life, their impatience with the 'status quo,' are rooted to what they believe to be the fundamental purpose of Jesus for His Church. He is their divine pattern. They appeal from the decisions made by the Church fathers and the theologians to the authority of Jesus . . .

"As against the theological metaphysics of the Fourth Century the youth of to-day prefer the simple gospel story of the First Century Christians. These young people are frankly sceptical of any theology or any metaphysics that make for disunion. To their thinking the continued preservation of our denominational distinctions rests upon the fundamental premise that the theologians and the metaphysicians have discovered formulas of belief and conduct that were not implicit within the teachings of Jesus.

Youth rejects that premise and having rejected the premise they see the whole denominational superstructure falling to the ground. Youth's interest in a united Christendom springs out of the inescapable logic of First Century Christianity, that loyalty to Jesus may be accomplished without dividing the ranks of the loyal. Youth believes that as we draw nearer to Christ we draw nearer to one another, collectively and institutionally, that when our purpose is one with Him we shall have achieved peace within the Church, division will have disappeared, and unity will have been accomplished."

There is on the part of youth "a new interpretation of religious loyalty, a loyalty that is considerate enough of the Church as an institution, but that is dynamically loyal to Jesus Christ as a person. This does not mean that the Church is to pass away. But it does mean that the Church is to be stripped of non-essentials. Included among these non-essentials, as viewed by youth, are the many creedal divisions that appeal to an authority quite outside the New Testament gospel as preached and practised by Jesus. All doctrinal standards and theological tenets that cannot find in Christ their claim to infallibility, are to be side-tracked. That means that sectarian biases that have sprung up during the past few hundred years are to be steadily and finally rejected. . ."

In every one of the youth conventions, conferences, and movements, Dr. Van Kirk finds a "tendency to discard as relatively unimportant any appeal to

religious authority that does not centre in Jesus Christ." He says:

"We see here the result of this higher loyalty to Christ, a loyalty that approaches in fervour that of the early disciples; a loyalty that approaches in fortitude and courage that of the First Century martyrs; a loyalty that compares favourably with that of Paul, whose passion for Christian Unity absorbed all lesser interests of his life, Jewish rites, Jewish blood, and Jewish traditions. It is difficult to see how the sectional loyalties that are built up around denominational interests will be able to resist for very long this deeper and more significant loyalty to Christ that sweeps before it the theological accretions of the centuries."

Youth is undoubtedly leading the Church toward unity in our day. Youth has been led by age into our present divisions, and has been led by age to believe that our present order of denominationalism must be maintained. When the Christian Endeavour movement began it looked for a time as if it would fulfil the dream of its founder and embrace the youth of all the great Protestant churches. But the hand of denominational authority was stretched forth and the youth of several strong Protestant churches was rescued from this unity movement and for denominationalism. Youth refuses to be led to-day in any direction that takes them away from unity. Youth in the

Church is on the march and we may dare to believe that they are headed toward the promised land of a complete answer to the prayer of their Lord that His people might be one. One is struck forcibly by the marked contrast between such books as Dr. Van Kirk's and the reports of the recent Student Conferences in America, and the volume which contains the addresses delivered at the World Evangelical Alliance in 1923, and the reports of Lausanne. In the one, we see youth eager to go, ready to break through the barriers which have separated the Churches for centuries; in the other we hear age speaking in a theological tongue that is utterly foreign to the youth of the Church, and talking about the things in the great religious bodies which must be preserved at all costs. Youth is daring in this matter of Christian Unity, while age is still hedging and fearful. If we will give youth just half a chance to-day, and are courageous enough to follow them back to Jesus Christ himself, they will lead us out of our divisions. Already they are clearing the way and gathering some valuable material for the foundation of the United Church.

Any proposal for the unity of the Church that stops short of Pentecost and the primitive Christian community, will not meet the demands of our day. Too much of our present discussion about unity has to do with the things that have been added to

Christianity—orders, creeds, traditions, and organization. Many who claim to be advocates of Christian Unity try to beg the question by saying that we already have unity, and by trying to justify the various branches of the Church by the use of Jesus' parable of the vine and the branches, and Paul's figure of the body with its various members. They forget that Jesus was talking to his disciples before the Church had ever come into being and that Paul was talking about the local congregation, and that neither of them had in mind the present divided condition of the Church. All this talk is in justification of men and the things men have made and the places of power and authority men hold in the name of Christ. So long as the present order of things gives men place and power and authority, they will defend it and seek to show that it is the divinely constituted order of things in the Church. Through carnal men division came; through the Divine man alone can unity come. The voice of man has not healed the hurts of the race and caused the nations to glorify God. Only the voice of that Divine Man whom the disciples saw on the Mount of Transfiguration and whom they accepted as their Lord after the resurrection, can save the world. It was concerning this Jesus that God said, "Hear ye Him."

In the closing chapter of his gospel, Luke tells us of two of the disciples who were making their way

toward a little village called Emmaus. They had rejected as pure nonsense the story of the women that Jesus had risen from the tomb. They were absolutely sure that they had seen Him for the last time on earth. They were talking together about all the things that had happened during the last week, and as "they were talking and discussing them, Jesus himself came up and went with them, but they were prevented from recognizing him." In the conversation which followed Jesus sought to convince them from their own Scriptures that the story of the women was true, and when they "reached the village to which they were going, he acted as though he were going on, but they urged him not to, and said, 'Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. And when he took his place with them at the table, he took the bread and blessed it and broke it in pieces, and handed it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew him." (Goodspeed.)

So sure are many of the leaders in the Church that all talk of and plans looking toward unity in the Church are pure nonsense, that when they meet to discuss the problem, even though Jesus Himself be present, because of their doubt they are prevented from recognizing Him. If these leaders would but listen to Him, and all that the New Testament has to say about a United Church,

they would begin to see that it is indeed "toward evening" for our present denominationalism. And if, in the presence of this realization, they would only invite Jesus to sit down with them around their council tables and give Him some place in their deliberations, their eyes would be opened and they would know Him for what He really is in His Church.

Out of the ancient literature of the East there comes this story with a modern message. A city was besieged by foes and was about to send forth its warriors to attack the enemy. Then, from the camp of the enemy there issued a magician, who by waving his hand, conjoined with the sorcerer's arts, turned citizens and warriors alike into stone. Everything in which there was life became as if it were dead. Mailed knights about to mount their steeds, full clad for battle, stood motionless with hands upon the pommel of their saddles. The infantry, drawn up in close formation, were like so many marble statues. The gathered throngs of men, women, and children stood as if they were groups carved in stone. All were silent, motionless, powerless—the certain prey of the enemy. Suddenly along the lifeless streets there darted a youth with radiant countenance bearing aloft a golden trumpet. He stood in the midst of the motionless throngs. He lifted the trumpet to his lips, and one long, clear blast sounded upon the air. Mightier than the arts of the sorcerer, the peal

of that golden trumpet! At the sound life leapt once more into the cold veins of death. The knight sprang to the saddle. The long lines of infantry moved out through the city gates. And, amid the ringing cheers of the populace, the warriors of the city swept upon the invaders to their utter overthrow and flight.

Through the arts and arguments of philosophers and theologians and schemers after ecclesiastical pomp and power, the Church stands divided to-day and so entrenched behind her creeds and traditions that she cannot meet the demands of a scientifically trained age, and an age which is in open revolt against all dogma and creed and tradition. Her enemies are powerful, and they are deeply entrenched in human society. And because of her divided condition and accumulated encumbrances the Church often stands silent, motionless, and powerless in the face of her enemies. Who shall sound in our day the trumpet call to a united, all-powerful, conquering Church? Who shall sound again the battle-cry of emancipation from the accumulated religious rubbish of the ages which weighs the Church down and hinders her progress at every turn? For mightier than the voice of man speaking as philosopher or theologian or schemer after power; mightier than the petrified experiences which have become encased in creed and dogma and tradition, is the voice of the Living

Christ in the New Testament! Only that voice, made vocal in a Church that is united and that can preach the gospel in a language that this age can understand, can challenge the Disciples of Christ in our day to action against their enemies, and lead them on to sure victory.

From the hands of those who have almost grown weary with years of waiting youth has taken that golden trumpet to-day, and it is sounding a clear and challenging call to unity and victory. That call leads us back to the Christ in whom the disciples were united at Pentecost, and in whose name they conquered their world. When the new Pentecost of power comes to the Church, the disciples will be "together in one accord," and that unity will be in Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER IV

THE POWER OF PENTECOST

"But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." This was the Master's promise. On the Day of Pentecost, "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit." The volume on Acts in the Clarendon Bible says: "The real effect of the Pentecostal event was that the disciples felt themselves uplifted, energized, and ready to act. They attained a sense of corporate self-consciousness and an astonishingly bold conviction of their mission."

Dr. McGiffert, in his book "Apostolic Age," says: "Pentecost was a day of power, a day on which the Spirit of God manifested himself through the disciples as a power for the conversion of others. It was the inauguration of the evangelistic activity of the Christian Church, when the disciples began the work to which they believed themselves called by the risen Lord, the work of witness-bearing. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit they bore

testimony on the Day of Pentecost to their Master, and they bore it with power; and it was not the coming of the Spirit, but the testimony of the disciples, that constituted the great central fact of the day, the fact that makes the day historic."

These men who received power on the Day of Pentecost received it for a definite purpose. They had a definite work to do. That they were conscious of their mission during those days when they waited for power, is revealed by the remarks of Peter when he makes the suggestion that one of their number be elected to take the place of Judas. "Of the men therefore that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, until the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of the resurrection."

These men did not have any theories about Jesus to propose or defend. They did not have any creed to define and hedge about. At the time they waited for power they did not even have any organization to keep going. They did not have any budget to raise. They did not have any special aims to reach. One can hardly imagine Peter calling the rest of the disciples together and saying to them as our modern leaders do, "Now, fellows, we must set our aims for the Day of Pentecost. We must have at least three thousand additions on that day." These men did not

have anything to promote. They had a simple story to tell the world about One with whom they had lived for about three years. One who had died to reveal the love and salvation of God to them, and One whom God had raised up from the dead. Pentecost gave them power to tell that story and to become witnesses to those simple facts which they knew to be true, and to convince others of their truth. The gift of the Holy Spirit came not to help men defend a creed, or to promote an established institution and organization, but to empower them to tell a story of that which they had seen and heard, to be witnesses to Jesus Christ, his life, his death, and his resurrection, to the ends of the earth. And when this power came they used it for the purpose of witnessing, as we shall see in a later study. The Lord's day as a day of fellowship and worship was a witness to the resurrection. The Lord's Supper, in which the risen Lord was memorialized, was a witness to the resurrection; and the ordinance of Christian Baptism was a witness to the resurrection.

Through the centuries men have made an attempt to build upon an infallible Church. They have attempted to build upon an infallible Book. But always these external infallible authorities have proved to be inadequate, and the source of division within the ranks of the disciples. These men who received power on the Day of Pentecost had neither an infalli-

ble Book nor an infallible Church. They had a great experience. They had a group of historical facts, contemporary for them, of which they were absolutely sure, and their power consisted not in any external infallible authority, but in their witness to the things they knew to be true.

This is the witness the Church should bear in every age. The business of the Church and the Christian pulpit is not, primarily, that of the defence of any doctrine, or creed, or scheme, or order of things ecclesiastical. The pulpit in recent years has been loud in its defence of the Book. A few religious leaders have spent all their time in rallying the ministry to the defence of the Book against modern scholarship and modern science. The Bible does not need the defence of the pulpit. The business of the pulpit is to preach the Bible rather than defend it. The Christian preacher is set for the witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ to the world. We are not to make the pulpit a court in which the religion of Jesus Christ is defended against its enemies, but a stronghold from which the great facts of the gospel shall be hurled, week after week, to scatter and confound the ranks of the enemies. A pulpit in the trenches and continually on the defensive will never win any notable victories for the Church. The World War was a draw so long as both sides kept to their trenches. When one side carried the fight out into the open, victory came.

If the Church to-day expects power to come from on high to help it in its defence of the present order of things, to prove its points, and bolster up its creeds and organizations, it will be doomed to disappointment. Power will come for just one purpose—to help the pulpit of to-day witness to those simple facts of the gospel that turned the pagan world of the First Century upside down and thoroughly confounded its wisest philosophers and religious leaders. When the Church begins to take her real mission, that of witnessing for Christ, to the uttermost parts of the earth, as seriously as the early disciples did, then she may expect power.

No one can doubt that one of the most urgent needs of the modern Church is power. What Dr. John A. Hutton says of the churches in England, is true also of our American churches:

"Every Church just now is living too much by its wits. Never did men in office in the Church work harder. Never were they more willing to learn. Never were Church buildings so constantly in use. Never were appeals more insistent. Yet, at the best, having done all, we stand. Such success as the churches claim is not of the highest quality; it is too much fretted with anxiety and labour. It wants certain notes of peace, of fulness, of that confidence in God which is the victory over the world. It is not pregnant, overflowing. It has a basic worry and strain. It has enough to do with itself."

In the *International Review of Missions* for January, 1927, there is an account of a significant movement that has been started in England. It is called "The Jerusalem Chamber Fellowship of Prayer." From the account, which was written by St. Clair Donaldson, Bishop of Salisbury, we take two paragraphs which speak of the lack of power in the modern Church:

"In every section of the Church, in every field of the Church's aggressive labour, there is the sense of failure, or at least of resources inadequate to the task. . . . The trouble is not that the Church is inactive; never probably has there been more evidence of vigorous life than there is to-day. But the output still falls altogether short of the need; relatively the tree is barren, and nothing can bring adequate fruits but the word of power from on high. We are weary of campaigns and forward movements; nothing will avail but a revival of spiritual power, and life. . . .

"What but these are the signs that will convince a bewildered world of the presence of the Spirit? A Church burning with a desire to preach Christ; a Church awakened out of its prayerlessness to a spirit of eager supplication; a Church coming together out of its divisions into unity through its great common hunger to know Christ and obey His commands; a Church no longer supine and self-centred in the face of moral evil, but witnessing to Christ's life in every department of life; a Church with a message

'understanded of the people'; a Church ready to offer itself, its best and dearest, for the extension of the Kingdom; a Church whose members are determined by God's grace to remove from their own hearts whatever may be hindering the manifestation of His love and power. This is the work of revival; this is the witness which will convince the world."

As we face this problem of powerlessness in the modern world of religious activity we come face to face with three general groups in the Church. The first is standing with folded arms looking up into the heavens awaiting the Lord's return. Its leaders admit by their actions and the tone of their message that the gospel is insufficient for the salvation of human society, and that we must wait for redemption until the Lord shall come in His glory and power to overthrow the wicked. The second group has put the major emphasis upon organizations, programmes, campaigns, and drives. Its leaders are sure that the Kingdom of God can only come on earth through promotion. They have succeeded in recent years in whipping the local Churches into line with their plans, and undoubtedly have done many splendid things for the Kingdom. They meet a real need in our modern world.

The third group is made up of those who still believe that the "gospel is the power of God unto salvation," not only for every one who believes, but

for the whole of human society in all of its intricate and difficult relationships. They believe in organizations and programmes and promotion, but they put the major emphasis upon the message and the spiritual power at the heart and centre of the organization, rather than upon the organization itself. They do not believe that the reign of righteousness on earth must wait for the second coming of our Lord, neither do they believe that the reign of righteousness will come through campaigns and drives. They believe that the supreme need of the Church is power, spiritual power, the power of the Holy Spirit which was promised and which came on the Day of Pentecost. And in this group lies the hope of salvation for the Church and for the world.

The spiritual power which came at Pentecost enabled the disciples to bear witness to Christ with power, but it did more than this. To understand the nature and power of the Holy Spirit which Jesus promised to His disciples we must read back into the gospels. Among the things which Jesus promised as a result of the power of the Holy Spirit, the following three stand out as being the most important: The power to guide the disciples of Jesus' day into a deeper and fuller knowledge of God's revelation of Himself in the Jewish Scriptures, and undoubtedly this applied also to the disciples of later ages and to the Christian Scriptures; the power to

convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come; and the power of comfort in the great trials and crises of human existence. This is the nature of the power of the Holy Spirit as Jesus is reported to have given it Himself.

Surely the Church needs power to do these three things, and they all come within the range of its witness to Christ. If there ever was a day when men and women were bewildered concerning the real truth of religion, it is now. People are running wild in their search for some new truth, or perhaps we might better say some new intellectual or emotional thrill. But the thing people are seeking is not to be found here and there, but in the word of our God and His Christ. Has it not been true, that in every great crisis of history since the beginning of the Church, when men have searched everywhere for some new gospel, the word which finally leads them out of the wilderness is a word from the Book of God which has been seen by some spirit-filled prophet or servant of God?

There is nothing we need more in our modern message than the power of real conviction. The world needs to be convicted of its sin. The conscience of our age concerning sin is terribly blurred. Perhaps morality was never at a lower stage than it has been since the War. And, most startling of all, is the fact that these lower standards of morals do not

cause men and women to be in the least conscience-stricken. The Church needs some great voice, backed up by some great power, to convict men of the reality of sin. Then, the world needs to be convinced of the worth of righteousness. People must be made to see that righteousness is one of the essential values in life, and absolutely necessary to both individual and social salvation. And this age needs to face squarely the question of judgment to come. I make no appeal for a return to the old motive of a hell of fire and brimstone. I would not hold men over a place of torture and urge them to join the Church merely as a way of escape. But I think the world must be brought face to face with the fundamental principle running through both nature and religion, that judgment of sin and punishment for sin are absolutely inevitable, for "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." So long as men and women believe that judgment is a myth and that sin is never punished, the standards of morals will continue downward, and the very foundations of human society will be threatened.

Our world needs the Holy Spirit as a power to comfort. It is still a wounded and heart-broken world. Stretching from Belgium to the Alps there is one continuous graveyard in which millions of earth's choicest sons lie buried. And for every grave in that vast cemetery there is one or more broken and

wounded human heart. Our mines, our industrial machinery, our transportation system, disease, and the uncontrolled power of flood and tempest and fire and earthquake, leave desolation and broken hearts in their wake every year. What other agency except the Church of Jesus Christ has been promised the power of comfort to human hearts? What greater ministry can the Church in any age undertake, what greater witness can it possibly bear to the risen Lord, than this ministry of comfort and consolation to earth's broken-hearted? Thousands are waiting for this message which the Church alone can give.

The Church lacks this spiritual power which alone can make it effective because it has not always listened to its Lord. We have not waited for power. We have decided to take things in our own hands and do them after the manner of men. "Ye shall receive power when you understand all the Scriptures say of me." Is that what Jesus said? No; and yet there is where we have spent much energy and time. A right understanding of the person of Jesus is important and the Church has a right to be proud of its scholarship. We know more about the historical Jesus to-day, perhaps, than any generation has ever known. But with all our scholarship, we lack power. A scholarly and intellectual statement concerning the person of Jesus leaves the world unmoved unless there is spiritual power back of it.

"Ye shall receive power when you have covered the earth with magnificent church buildings." Is that what Jesus said? No; and yet we have done that very thing. The most beautiful buildings on the face of the earth are those in which God and Jesus Christ are worshipped. The grand cathedrals of the Old World are monuments to the religious devotion and art of past centuries. The stately churches that line the broad avenues and boulevards of our American cities are equal in beauty to any of our other public buildings. In our Capital city the great religious bodies are spending millions to erect national cathedrals which shall make their position in the hearts of the people secure for many generations to come. And now the skyscraper Church has come to take its place in the heart of our great cities, beside the temples which have been erected to the god of business and which represent the material side of our civilization. Every year in America we spend an increasing amount on new church buildings. But the cathedrals of other days and the skyscraper temples of to-day have not given the Church power to conquer the world. In themselves, buildings, however magnificent or high, have no power.

"Ye shall receive power when you have perfected your missionary and benevolent organizations." Is that what Jesus said? No; he said nothing about the details of any organization. And yet, this seems to be

our ideal. The tendency of every great religious body in recent years has been to command its best brains and talent for purely organizational purposes. Men who could have moved the nation with spiritual power from great pulpits have been set to the task of running machines. We have great missionary and benevolent organizations functioning to-day with an efficiency equal to that of our gigantic commercial and industrial organizations. But in spite of these the orphan still cries for bread, old age suffers and dies in want, aged ministers eke out a miserable existence on a meagre pension or in the county poor farms, crime stalks abroad upon the face of the earth bolder than ever before, men and women living under the very shadow of the Church sin and die in their sin, and millions of human beings have never heard the name of Jesus.

"Ye shall receive power when you have founded and endowed great colleges and universities." Is that what Jesus said? No; and yet the Church has done this very thing, and done it well. One of the glories of the Church has been its interest in education and its institutions of higher learning. We owe our whole system of higher education to-day to the Church. But in spite of the interest of the Church in higher education, its educational leaders have not yet been able to spiritualize education even in the Church institutions, and they have had very little

influence upon the spiritual life of the great State institutions. Church colleges have been endowed and operated to further the interests of some sect rather than for the purpose of filling all education full of spiritual power. And while the educational institutions which the Church has built have been busy training leaders to defend their own religious positions, the whole of our educational system outside the Church colleges has been almost completely secularized. Speaking of the lack of spiritual power in our American education, Dr. Walter W. Van Kirk says in "Youth and Christian Unity":

"It is estimated that there are between thirty and thirty-five million children and young people in the United States who are receiving no religious instruction whatever. Whether or not this estimate is correct the number is appallingly large. And all this has been accomplished in the name of religion! The authorities of our public schools, not wishing to give offence to any of the many adherents of our hundred or more forms of religious belief, have withdrawn the teaching of religion from the class-room. As a consequence our young people are being taught a sociology that is only indirectly concerned with human brotherhood, in a science that frequently leans toward atheism, in a philosophy of realism that ignores the element of an intelligent purpose, in a psychology that is without social passion, in an ethics that sets up moral standards but that is incapable of generating that spiritual initiative which

is necessary to translate these standards into conduct. With what result? We are producing a nation of spiritual illiterates. How can it be otherwise? Here is an educational system that claims to provide a thorough preparation for all the major concerns of human life. And yet no place is reserved for religion. Children and young people growing up under such circumstances cannot help but feel that religion is just a petty non-essential. Deprived of religious instruction in their formative years these school children and youth approach the responsibilities of maturity wholly unprepared to meet life's moral emergencies."

No matter how many or how great the educational institutions of the Church, unless they give her power to heal her own divisions and enable her to make some vital spiritual impact upon the non-Church educational system of America, they are powerless institutions. Education in itself will only help people to become more clever pagans. Filled with spiritual power, it will prove to be the saving salt of our present civilization.

It is power the Church needs. Power to vitalize the local congregations of disciples, so that they in turn may vitalize the whole organized activities of the Kingdom. What Jesus said was this: "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you." There is nothing that can take the place of this power. With this power back of them our scholarship, our

magnificent church buildings, our missionary and benevolent organizations, and our splendid educational institutions will become a hundredfold more effective; without this power they are doomed to failure.

In "The Valley of Vision," Dr. Henry Van Dyke has a story called "The King's Highway." Whether in fact or fiction, I know not, he tells of meeting "in the last remnant of Belgium, a corner yet unconquered by the German horde . . . a tall young man walking among the dunes, between the sodden lowland and the tumbling sea. . . . The sky above was gray; the northern sea was gray; the southern fields were hazy gray over green; the smoke of the shells bursting in the air was gray. Gray was the skeleton of the ruined city in the distance; gray were the shattered spires and walls of a dozen hamlets on the horizon; gray the eyes of the young man who walked in faded blue uniform in the remnant of Belgium."

Addressing this young man he said: "Sir, I am sure that you are his majesty, the King of Belgium." The young man answered, "You make the usual mistake in my title. If I were only King of Belgium, you see, I should have but a poor kingdom now—only this narrow strip of earth, perhaps four hundred square miles of débris, just a place to stand on, enough to fight on, and, if need be, to die in—that is not my kingdom. My real title, Monsieur, is King of the Belgians."

Then said the author: "Sir, you have a glorious kingdom which shall never be taken away. But as for your land, the fates have been against you. How will you ever get back to it? The Germans are strong as iron, and they bar the way. Will you make peace with them and take what they have so often offered you?"

He answered calmly: "Never; that is not the way home, it is the way to dishonour. When God brings me back, my army and my queen are going with me to liberate my people. There is only one way that leads there—the King's Highway. Look, Monsieur, you can see the beginnings of it down there. I hope you wish me well on that road, for I shall never take another."

And as he looked the author says a vision came, a vision which has since been realized in fact: "Into Brussels I see this man and woman ride through a welcome that rises around them like the voice of many waters—the welcome of those who have waited and suffered. . . . They have come home. Not by the low road of cowardly surrender; not by the crooked road of compromise and falsehood; not by the soft road of ease and self-indulgence; but by the straight road of faith, and courage and self-sacrifice—the King's Highway."

How can the Church get back to the unity and power of Pentecost? The spirit of sectarianism in the

Church and the power of the world are strong, and together they bar the way. Sectarianism offers to make peace upon the terms of place and power and authority for the men who have usurped the place of Jesus Christ in His Church. The world offers to make peace upon its own terms of ease and selfishness and compromise with its paganized standards of business and morality. But this is not the way of unity and power and conquest. When the Church of Jesus Christ finally comes into its own Kingdom, it will not be by the low road of cowardly surrender to the ethical and moral standards of a world steeped in materialism; not by the crooked road of compromise and falsehood about the real facts in every department of human knowledge and human life; not by the soft road of ease and self-indulgence; but by the straight road of a faith that is sure of Jesus Christ, and a courage and self-sacrifice that will prompt men and women to witness for Him in every relationship of life—the King's Highway of spiritual power!

CHAPTER V

THE PREACHER OF PENTECOST

The preacher of Pentecost was the man whose name always comes first in any mention of the disciples—Simon Peter. This man, as we know him before the death and resurrection of Jesus, presents a strange mixture of impulsiveness and stability, of cowardice and courage. It was Peter who always took the lead. He was pre-eminently a man of action. Dr. Charles R. Brown says of him: "He was no modest, shrinking petunia, blossoming in the back yard or wasting his fragrance on the desert air. He was out on the front porch talking, acting, taking the lead. He was constantly forging ahead into public notice. He was heard as well as seen."

Peter was also a man of deep and keen insight. It was Peter who gave utterance to that confession of faith in Jesus Christ which is receiving increasing consideration as the oldest and the one all-sufficient confession for the Church—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." It was Peter who was called a "rock" by his Master. It was Peter who declared he would never leave his Lord no matter

what came. But there was another stratum in his makeup. It was this same Peter who denied that he had ever known Jesus when he was confronted by a servant girl. It was this same Peter, however, who went out and wept bitterly for his sin, and who, after the resurrection, comes again into the position of leadership among the disciples. He takes the lead in the selection of one to take the place left vacant by the death of Judas, and it was only natural that he should become the chief preacher on the Day of Pentecost.

In his sermon on that day Peter's first word is in defence of the actions of his brethren. When the disciples, under the influence of the Spirit, began to speak with other tongues, the people were "confounded," "amazed," "they marvelled," they "were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this? But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine." Peter answered these charges by saying that the hour of the day was much earlier than that at which men became drunken, and by an appeal to the Jewish Scriptures to show that what the people had witnessed was in fulfilment of the words of one of their own prophets.

Having disposed of this matter, the preacher of Pentecost then launches into the body of his sermon. And in this sermon Peter does three very definite things: First, he charges the "men of Israel" who are

before him, with being a party to the crime of having crucified Jesus of Nazareth. "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know . . . ye by the hands of lawless men did crucify and slay." Second, he witnesses to the fact of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead, and seeks to prove that this fact is in fulfilment of the Scriptures of the Jews. "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. . . . Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." Third, in answer to the cry of those who had been convicted of their sin of being a party to the crucifixion of Jesus, and who were convinced that God had made Him both Lord and Christ, Peter gave specific instructions as to what they should do. "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Here we have three marks of a great gospel sermon and of great gospel preaching: fearlessness in rebuking men face to face for their sins; the exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth to that high place where He has been set by the Father, and a witness to his resurrection; and a specific, definite statement of the way of salvation from sin in terms of action rather than feeling. In

the studies on "The Christ of Pentecost" and "The Salvation of Pentecost" these last two marks of great gospel preaching will be discussed. Our interest in this study is with the first—Peter's fearlessness in charging these men who were assembled at Pentecost, face to face, with the crime of crucifying Jesus.

"Jesus of Nazareth . . . ye by the hands of lawless men did crucify and slay." In these words Peter cuts straight to the heart of his message and to the heart of his hearers. He intends to witness to the resurrection of Jesus; but first of all he wants these men to know that their hands are stained with blood, that it was because of their kind that Jesus had been rejected and crucified. They were guilty of the crime of killing the Son of God, of choosing a common trouble-maker if not an actual murderer, instead of that One who had been exalted to the right hand of God. They had spurned and rejected the love and salvation of God as it had been offered to them in one of their own sons, Jesus of Nazareth. Peter would burn this fact into the hearts of those men before him with all the power the Holy Spirit had given him. The unstableness and cowardice are all gone, his eyes flash fire, and his words fairly scorch. There is no hedging or half-apologetic note as this man who had seen his risen Lord face to face rebukes to their face the sin of the men who had crucified Him. The preaching of Peter at Pentecost had upon it all the

marks of the preaching of the Old Testament prophets. As we see him drive his specific charge into the hearts of his hearers, we can see Elijah standing before Ahab on the threshold of Naboth's garden, and we can hear Nathan's "Thou art the man" ringing through the corridors of David's palace. Peter's type of preaching at Pentecost is the only type that can ever convict men of their blackest sins and prick them to their very hearts.

One of the most glaring and common sins in the history of Christianity has been that of crucifying afresh this Son of God. Jesus of Nazareth has been nailed not to one cross, but to a thousand crosses. The epistle to the Hebrews, written perhaps less than fifty years after the actual crucifixion of Jesus, speaks of those who were crucifying him afresh and putting his name to open shame. Wherever in any age men turn their backs upon Jesus and refuse to accept and acknowledge Him as God's supreme revelation to the world, they crucify Him afresh. Whenever men and women by their neglect of spiritual things say,

> "I lived for myself, I thought for myself,
> For myself, and none beside—
> Just as if Jesus had never lived,
> As if He had never died—"

they crucify Him afresh. Men and women by the thousands are living to-day just as if Jesus never

lived or died or came forth from the tomb. For them the religion of Jesus Christ is not a major concern of life, but only a petty non-essential. They are living as if all the real values in life were material values, and the chief aim of all existence pleasure. They are living as if they were mere animals, plodding on through the years to a death that ends all.

In a splendid description of the painting, "Despised and Rejected of Men" by Sigismond Goetze, Dr. Hugh T. Kerr has mirrored our present attitude toward Jesus in a fine way:

"It is an artist's conception of the second crucifixion. Near St. Paul's Cathedral, from which gleams the golden cross, prophetic of the triumph of Christianity, the painter represents Christ again upon his cross wearing the crown of thorns. It is afternoon in London; the crowd passes and surges on, heedless, blind to his presence. Near by is a jockey almost touching the feet of Jesus, engrossed in studying the latest race bulletin. Here is a scientist with his test tube, too busy to bestow a look upon the crucified. The representatives of the life of pleasure are all here; women in evening dress and gay courtiers. Here is an abandoned woman, and a newsboy exhibiting a newspaper with the latest divorce sensation. In the forefront of the picture is an ecclesiastic, well-kept, self-satisfied, but oblivious to Christ. They are all here, the representatives of our modern life, even the theologian, so busy with his teaching that he misses the spirit of the cross. Only one figure in all

the throng lifts her face to the lonely figure on the cross. She is a nurse on her way to a home of suffering, and for a moment she pauses before passing on her way. It is an appealing picture of Christ neglected, unrecognized, dishonored"—crucified again by a heedless world.

What Goetze has pictured so graphically upon the canvas, G. A. Studdert-Kennedy has given us in verse:

"When Jesus came to Golgotha, they hanged Him on a tree,
They drove great nails through hands and feet, and made a Calvary;
They crowned Him with a crown of thorns, red were his wounds and deep,
For those were rude and cruel days, and human life was cheap.
When Jesus came to Birmingham, they simply passed Him by——"

It is true of New York, Chicago, and all of our great American cities. Thousands are crucifying Jesus afresh every day by simply passing Him by in utter indifference to all that He is and has for the world.

Then, there are wicked men to-day who would deliberately crucify the Son of God afresh to get Him out of their way. There are whole areas of modern life, and those which are counted by many as being

of supreme importance, where there is a constant clash with the ideals of Jesus Christ. There are circles in which His ideal of human brotherhood is frankly not wanted. There are whole sections of life in which His standard of the value of human life is not accepted and not welcome. There are many men and women whose personal lives do not square with His standard of ethics and morality. Frankly, the world does not want Jesus any more to-day than it did when He lived in the flesh. To know Jesus as those early disciples knew Him in the flesh, and as we are coming to know Him to-day through our more careful study of the gospels, is to know that to accept Him is to make a radical change in human life and human society. Because men as individuals and as the representatives of the present order of things in almost every department of life, do not want to make this change, they are doing with Jesus exactly what the Jews did with Him. He is being crucified again at the hands of wicked and thoughtless men.

Wherever greed and selfishness
  Strive for the mastery of men,
And crush the soul which God would bless—
  There, Christ is crucified again.

Wherever War Lords lift their arms
  To drench the earth with blood and pain,
And men repeat their false alarms—
  There, Christ is crucified again.

Wherever children toil for bread
And cry for justice all in vain,
Like victims to the altar led—
There, Christ is crucified again.

Wherever at the heart's closed door
The Master stands and knocks in vain,
Because the soul loves "these things more"—
There, Christ is crucified again.

Nothing short of the type of preaching which Peter used at Pentecost will convict our modern world of being a party to this fresh crucifixion of Jesus Christ; that by its own wilfulness or indifference it is allowing wicked men to nail to the cross of their greed and selfishness all the real values of life which Jesus came to give to men.

A ministry of rebuke, a ministry that will face the men who are responsible for our modern sins and say fearlessly, "Ye are the men," is sorely needed. An English poet has given our American Christianity a rebuke that ought to sting the American ministry wide awake to the task of convicting the big sinners of their sins. This poet, William Watson, "has the spirit and hope of the new democracy, and holds that religion is only the mummery of priests if it fails to heal the open sores of the world." He looked upon the magnificent Cathedral of St. John the Divine which is being erected in New York City, and wrote these words:

"City of merchants, lords of trade and gold,
Traffickers great as they that bought and sold
When ships of Tarshish came to Tyre of old;
City of festering streets by misery trod,
Where half-fed, half-clad children swarm unshod,
While thou dost rear thy splendid fane to God.
O rich in fruits and grains and oils and ores,
And all things that the beautiful earth outpours,
Yet lacking leech-craft for thy leprous sores!
Heal thee betimes, and cleanse thee, lest in ire
He whom thou mockest with pomp of arch and spire
Come on thee sleeping with a scythe of fire.
Let nave and transcript rest awhile; but when
Thou hast done His work who lived and died for men,
Then build His temple on high—not, not till then."

It was through preaching, fearless preaching that hewed to the line and did not dodge the facts, that the men who crucified Jesus Christ were convicted and brought to repentance. Never forget that, in a day when almost every other phase of the ministry is exalted above preaching! All our emphasis upon boosting, and organization, and publicity, and even religious education, will not convict the great sinners of our modern civilization. It is not the gospel in books, but the gospel worked through the crucible of living souls on fire with its truth, and released from human lips that have been touched by the Spirit of God, that has been the power of God for the convic-

tion of sinners. It will be through this same kind of fearless and fact-facing preaching that the men who are crucifying the Son of God to-day will be brought to repentance, and the Church brought to a new Pentecost of power.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHRIST OF PENTECOST

We have said that the three supreme facts which form the background of Pentecost are: Jesus lived; Jesus died; and Jesus lived again. The portrait of Jesus which Peter gives in his Pentecost sermon rests upon these three facts. Practically all that has been made of the person of Jesus is contained or implied in this Pentecost sermon. It is not likely that some later writer has given us the Christology of Pentecost out of his own imagination, as some of the scholars suggest. If, as many scholars hold, the early speeches in Acts, including Peter's Pentecost sermon, are given to us as the free composition of the author, expressing his views of what must have been said, we can still be quite sure that they are based upon either genuine information, or reflect a genuinely primitive tradition of the early Christian message. We feel certain that they were based upon reminiscence, and if Luke was as careful in the selection of his material for Acts as he tells us he was in selecting the material for his gospel, they can be accepted as embodying the standard Christian expression of the

things which were most surely believed and preached in the early Church.

Dr. McGiffert in his "Apostolic Age" points out the fact that there is one phase of the Christology of the early Church which is especially prominent in John's gospel and in Paul's letters, which does not seem to be reflected in the sermon of Peter on the Day of Pentecost. He says: "The terms applied to Jesus in Acts attach to him in his exalted post-resurrection existence only, and characterize simply his calling and mission as Messiah. They say nothing as to his natural constitution. He is not represented as a pre-existent heavenly being, but simply as a man approved of God and chosen by Him as the Messiah, and then raised by Him to the position as Lord."

Peter did not debate or theorize about the humanity or the divinity of Jesus. He accepted the facts about Jesus as they had come under his personal observation and preached them with all the power which had been given to him. He did not come to his conclusions about Jesus after a long period of study or because of his superior scholarship. Judged by the intellectual standards of his day, Peter would have been classed as an ignorant, un-lettered man. His sole qualification for the important position of Pentecost preacher was a white-hot experience of Jesus as a human friend and as the risen Lord, and the power of the Spirit which the risen Lord had

promised. The Christ Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost was not the Christ of any system of theology; not the Christ of any creed that had the stamp of Church authority upon it; but the Christ of men who had known and experienced Him, and who believed their life work to be that of bearing witness for him. It has been suggested that the early Church went forward "not by the power of its scholarship, but by the power of its witness."

When we read Peter's sermon carefully we discover that the Christ of Pentecost was, first of all, the human Jesus of history. "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know. . . . " The Christ of Pentecost was the crucified Jesus: "Ye by the hands of lawless men did crucify and slay. . . . This Jesus whom ye crucified. . . ." The Christ of Pentecost was the irresistible, death-conquering Christ: "Whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." The Christ of Pentecost was the risen, exalted Christ: "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted. . . ." The Christ of Pentecost was the Lord: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ. . . ." The human Jesus, the crucified

Jesus, the irresistible, death-conquering Christ, the risen exalted Christ, Christ the Lord—this was the Christology of the most primitive Christian message. All that these terms imply came within the range of the preaching and teaching of the earliest Christian community.

It is well to notice the emphasis which Peter puts upon Jesus the man in this Pentecost sermon. He insists that the exalted Lord whom he preaches is "this Jesus whom ye crucified." The earliest Christian message did not ignore the humanity of Jesus.

In his lecture on "The Human Life of God" in "The Gospel for an Age of Doubt," Dr. Henry Van Dyke quotes the following statement from Horace Bushnell: "Christ is in such a sense God, or God manifested, that the unknown term of His nature, that which we are most in doubt of, and about which we are least capable of any positive affirmation, is the human." In his comment upon this statement he says:

"Whatever may be said of this sentence as a statement of the result of dogmatic theology—and in this sense, I, for one, do not question its accuracy—when we consider its plain meaning as an expression of Christian experience and faith, one thing is clear: it is utterly out of touch with the experience and faith of the early disciples. It is in sharp and striking discord with the consciousness of the primitive

Church. For if there is anything to which the New Testament makes positive and undoubting affirmation, it is the complete, genuine, and veritable humanity of Christ. If there is any fact that stands out luminous and distinct in the experience of the early Christians, it is that they saw in Christ, not merely the mysterious manifestation of the Divine in a form calculated to beget new doubts, and under conditions which must remain inscrutable and incomprehensible, but something utterly different. They saw the mystery reduced to terms of simplicity, the revelation levelled to the direct apprehension of man, the unveiling of the Father under conditions which were so familiar that they dissolved doubts and difficulties. They saw in Christ the human life of God."

The bitter controversies about the person of Jesus which rent the disciples asunder for centuries, and which marked out the chief divisions of the Church, began when the preachers and the theologians forgot that the Christ whom they were preaching was "this same Jesus" who had lived a human life among men for a period of years and had been killed by his enemies. It was a sorry day for the Church when Peter's emphasis was overlooked and neglected. I do not know where we could turn for a more sane and well-balanced statement of the person of Jesus and the Christology of the early Church than to Peter's Pentecost sermon. Without attempt-

ing to explain all the mysteries involved, he simply stated the facts as they had been burned into his own soul. Peter's passion was to witness for a Christ whom he knew, rather than attempt an explanation of a Christ about whom he had heard or read.

Does the Church need any other Christ than this Christ of Pentecost? Can the preaching of any age ever exhaust such a Christ as this? For the preacher who would preach Christ there is an inexhaustible source of material in the implications of this Pentecost sermon. How barren the soul of a preacher must be who whines because he cannot find any preaching material! And can we think of any age this Christ will not fit, or any deep universal human need which he cannot meet? When the writer of the Hebrew letter declared in the First Century that Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever," he stated a truth which the centuries have verified. The outward conditions of human life and society change from time to time, but the deep needs of the human heart go on forever. And always, when the human soul comes face to face with its supreme crisis, "this same Jesus" proves to be the way out.

In preaching Christ the preacher can find no better method to follow than that of Peter in his Pentecost sermon. Peter began with the Jesus of history, the human Jesus. "This same Jesus," the Jesus who actually lived and died, was, in the First Century, and

always has been, compellingly attractive. The Christ of the creeds is far removed from the intellectual concepts and the actual needs of the average man. The current controversies over the birth and person of Jesus are absolutely meaningless to the ordinary run of people. People want something in their religion that is alive and real. They are like children who tire of their wooden toys and want a dog or a cat, something they are sure is living. Peter revealed a master stroke in the art of preaching when he began with the human Jesus. When we begin our preaching with a risen, exalted Christ seated at the right hand of God upon some far-away throne, we do not get the ear of the average man. It is hard to make people acquainted with the risen and exalted Christ until they have come to know Jesus of Nazareth. People may worship Christ upon a throne when they know why he is there, but they will not fall in love with him. Common people do not get close enough to those who are upon thrones to fall in love with them, and in this day of democracy people do not look very kindly upon thrones of any kind. People fall in love with the Jesus of history who was perfectly human and who lived with men.

When we begin where Peter began, with a loving, winsome personality who went about among men healing their hurts, ministering to their needs, and finally being killed because he stood between the

common people and the vested interests of his day which were preying upon these people, we get the ear of the average man. To say that Jesus has been exalted to the right hand of God simply because God had the power to put him there, does not mean very much to the ordinary man. But to say, as the Scriptures suggest, that he was exalted because of the service which he rendered in behalf of men, "that he was made perfect, and became the author of eternal salvation" through suffering and sacrifice for others, that he won the right to reign at the right hand of God—this is to get the ear of the people, and especially youth, and lead them to the place where they will have the same love for the risen, exalted Christ which they have for the human Jesus. The Jesus men first learn to love is pictured by Richard Watson Gilder in his "The Passing Christ"—

"Behold Him now where He comes!
Not the Christ of our subtle creeds,
But the light of our hearts, of our homes,
Of our hopes, our prayers, our needs;
The brother of want and blame,
The lover of women and men,
With a love that puts to shame
All passions of mortal ken. . . .

"Ah no, thou life of the heart,
Never shalt thou depart!

Not till the leaven of God
Shall lighten each human clod;
Not till the world shall climb
To thy height serene, sublime,
Shall the Christ who enters our door
Pass to return no more."

When men have come to believe in the human Jesus and the risen and exalted Lord as one and the same person, then they are ready for the other high notes which Peter sounded in his Christology. "This same Jesus," crucified, risen, and exalted, is irresistible. The greatest and most common enemy of the race has been death. When we say that a man "cannot be holden of death," we put him in a class absolutely by himself. There is where Peter put Jesus, and there is where he has remained through the centuries. That tomb in Joseph's garden was the first, but not the last into which Jesus Christ has been placed by the hands of men. Even before the passion of the early disciples began to cool, and during that period when the Christians were known as the people who were turning the world upside down, men were already beginning to build a tomb of philosophy and dogma in which Jesus was to rest for generations.

But the irresistible Christ could not be holden of this kind of death, and after this tomb had been sealed and made as sure as an infallible Church and pope could make it, lo, there came a resurrection

morning on which "this same Jesus," crucified, risen, exalted, irresistible, came forth to walk with a little group of men and kindle in their hearts the fires which eventually flamed into the Protestant Reformation. But even while the ardour and enthusiasm of the Reformation was at its height men began to build the tomb of denominationalism and sectarianism. Jesus was laid carefully in this tomb and the seal was made as sure as the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible and the infallibility of the creeds could make it. But again, "this same Jesus," crucified, risen, exalted, irresistible, could not be holden of death which sectarian bitterness and ignorance had decreed for Him, and since the Reformation period He has gradually been breaking down the walls of that tomb and moving steadily forward to a new resurrection morn. In spite of the resurgence of denominationalism and sectarianism since the World War, and all the signs which seem to point to the contrary, the tomb of denominationalism and sectarianism is rapidly crumbling to the ground. It cannot hold this irresistible Christ, and after the earthquake which is shaking the whole religious world to its foundations has passed, out of the ruins of the tomb of our present order of things in religion the Living Christ will come again in a new resurrection.

Our Western civilization is a vast tomb in which men have sought to bury this irresistible Christ.

In "The Science of Power," Mr. Benjamin Kidd holds that our Western civilization is founded on force. He says:

"All the reasoned knowledge of the West is the science of force in one or other of its phases. . . . For countless ages before history has view of him, the fighting male of the West has streamed across Europe in successive waves of advance and conquest, vanquishing, exterminating, overwhelming, taking possession. . . . It is this fighting pagan of the world who has made the history of the West. The civilization which he has produced is the strangest flower in the fields of time. He has introduced into it at every point the spirit of the unmeasured ages of conquest out of which it has come. Into all the institutions which he has created he has carried the spirit of war, and the belief in force as the ultimate principle of the world."

"But," says Mr. Kidd, "at the same time he has inherited a religion which is the utter negation of force, and which in every phase of his development has remained the outstanding challenge to his conception of the omnipotence of force. He has struggled with this extraordinary inheritance for centuries in history. Deep in the inmost recesses of his nature he has continually persuaded himself against belief in it. He has set his science and philosophy to reason it away. He has gone forth on his business to the conquest of the world fortifying himself against it, with his spirit resolutely tuned to the doctrine of force."

The result of the clash of these two contending forces has been the almost utter negation of the fundamental principle of love in the religion of Jesus Christ, and the deliberate attempt on the part of many of the leaders of Western civilization to keep the Living Christ in the tomb which they have built for Him. These men have never accepted the ethics of Jesus and have defied His doctrine of love at every turn. They have accepted the religion about Jesus in its doctrinal forms and statements, but as yet the religion of Jesus has not become the dominant creative force in national or international policies. The Jesus who could solve all our intricate and harassing problems, the Jesus who could lead men and nations out of all their present difficulties, has been buried by a civilization which wears His name and which claims to be Christian.

But this tomb is also crumbling. "This same Jesus" has come forth in recent years to walk with a little group of men, in all the nations, who are beginning to take Him seriously. As they have gathered around their council tables to talk of world conditions and problems, they are conscious that this Presence who has walked with them in the way is there also. And in the breaking of the bread of the common needs of all men everywhere, their eyes are being opened and they are beholding in the Jesus whom they thought had been buried away from the

world their only hope. "This same Jesus" is walking with the youth of every nation as they lead out upon the great highways of thought and achievement, and He is kindling in their hearts the fires which shall light the way for a resurrection morning for all humanity. This Jesus cannot be "holden of death." Men can never build a tomb that can imprison him for long! At no time since Pentecost has this irresistible Christ been more in evidence than he is to-day. At no time have the tomb-builders faced more difficulties than they face to-day. At no time in the history of Christianity has there been a finer opportunity to preach this irresistible Christ of Pentecost than now!

And "this same Jesus," the loving, winsome Jesus of history, the crucified Jesus, the risen, exalted Christ, the irresistible Christ, has become for millions the Lord of life and death. The Lordship of Jesus is a theme that has always challenged the greatest Christian preachers. It is a theme that can never be exhausted. Peter reaches the climax of all that he has to say about Jesus in his Pentecost sermon in these words: "God hath made him both Lord and Christ." This was perhaps the crowning conception which the early Church had of Jesus. As Dr. Glover suggests, "The New Testament is full of the Lordship of Jesus. . . . Paul's writings are fairly haunted by this word." Many who heard Peter at Pentecost

took Christ as their Lord and went out to die for that faith.

Our age needs a Christ who is great enough to become the Lord of all life, and unless we have preached that kind of a Christ we have miserably failed. In his "Barrows Lectures," in a challenging chapter on "The Lordship of Jesus," Dr. Chas. W. Gilkey says:

"The Lordship of Jesus is no longer simply or even chiefly a theological proposition to be debated stoutly with those whose philosophical traditions, forms of thought, or points of view are different from our own. Nor is it simply a pious phrase to be quoted with proper unction from Acts 10:36 or Philippians 2:10–11, as if the fervent repetition of a formula were the sum of Christian duty and loyalty. The Lordship of Jesus is a living faith to be carried out into the whole area of human life, and applied in personal and social practice over all its range and extent. It holds that Jesus' principles and way of life are not only valid, but highest and best in all fields of worthy human interest and activity, and for all the relations of men with each other. It refuses to admit that there is any department of life that is really worth living, whether business or pleasure, politics or international affairs, to which Jesus' standards and principles do not apply."

The Christology of Christianity is its heart, for in the final analysis Christianity is simply Christ Him-

self. When the Church has had a weak and uncertain message about Christ, it has been powerless. When the Church has been sure of its position about Christ and when He has been at the centre of its thought and message, it has been powerful. The most urgent need of the present hour is that of putting Jesus Christ at the centre of the thought and message of the Church. For ages men believed that the earth was the centre of our solar system. Then came the day when a few brave souls in the field of science dared to challenge this belief. After a fierce conflict, in which some of these men lost their lives, the world came to accept the position that the sun and not the earth is the centre of our solar system. As a result, all the former scientific conceptions of the universe and the scientific textbooks were relegated to the scrap-heap. Jesus Christ is not the centre of our present religious solar system. Men, the organizations of men, the methods and systems and theologies of men, are the centres around which our modern Christianity revolves. In spite of all we have to say about Jesus Christ and the high place which He holds in all our religious bodies, He is not the centre. Jesus Christ must be brought in from the circumference where He has been relegated by the emphasis of denominationalism, and put at the centre. Not what men have taught about Christ, and preserved in creeds and confessions of faith, but

Christ Himself must be made the object of our faith. The Church, all Churches, must revolve around Christ Himself and not any doctrines about Him, and men and women must be made to see that the organizations of the Church, the ordinances of the Church, and the activities of the Church are not ends in themselves, but have meaning and value only as they bring us into a vital, saving relationship with Jesus Himself. When Jesus Christ is made the centre of our religious solar system the old denominational order of things will be relegated to the circumference, and ultimately to the scrap-heap.

When men are convinced that this Jesus whom they have been ignoring, this Jesus whom they have been crowding out of their lives, their homes, their business, their governments, and even their churches, is the risen, exalted, irresistible Lord of all life who has been marching steadily down through the centuries with the tread of a conqueror, demolishing all the tombs men have erected for Him and in ways unknown to even the wisest of men bringing to naught all their selfish schemes—they will be pricked in their hearts and cry out for salvation as did those guilty Jews at Pentecost. The pulpits of the world on fire with a message which has at its centre the Christ of Pentecost will bring about another Pentecost!

CHAPTER VII

THE SALVATION OF PENTECOST

There is no greater verse in the New Testament than that one which contains Peter's answer to those guilty Jews who cried out for salvation from the sin of having crucified the Son of God. "Repent ye, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." In our study of this important utterance, however, we must be careful not to claim too much for it. While, as we have suggested, Peter in his Pentecost sermon gives us a conception of Jesus in which practically the whole Christology of the Church is implied, there is no evidence which leads us to believe that he was consciously working out a Christology for the Church. He was preaching to an immediate situation, and with a very definite purpose in mind. He wanted to convince the men before him that in crucifying a man whom they thought to be only a dangerous and troublesome reformer, they had killed the Son of God; and he wanted to convict them of this sin. His statement concerning Jesus was so compelling and convincing that he accomplished this purpose.

And when these convicted men cried out and said, "What shall we do?" Peter, speaking again to an immediate situation, gave them the direct and specific answer which is found in Acts 2:38. In our approach to the study of this passage we must keep this fact in mind. We must also remember that, however important this passage has been in the preaching of the Church, in giving it Peter had no thought of laying down a rigid formula of salvation for the Church and for future generations. Peter was not in the creed-making business on the Day of Pentecost. When we face such an immediate situation as that which Peter faced at Pentecost; when our preaching of Jesus as the Christ has convinced men that He is the risen, exalted Lord, and when they are convicted of the sin of having rejected Him, we cannot find a better answer to their cry for salvation than this answer which Peter gave. But we must not forget that the term "salvation" in Christianity is a big term, and implies a great deal more, perhaps, than any single passage in the New Testament would signify.

The salvation of Pentecost implies four very definite things: the acceptance of Jesus as Christ and Lord; repentance for the sin of having rejected Jesus and of becoming a party to His crucifixion; baptism for the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The cry of these men at Pentecost implies that they had accepted Peter's evaluation of the

Jesus whom they had helped to crucify, and presupposes their acceptance of him as both Christ and Lord. It also presupposes a conviction of the guilt of sin on their part. Peter's terms of salvation were stated against the background of men who recognized in Jesus of Nazareth the Christ of God, and whose own hearts told them that they were guilty of being a party to His crucifixion. This salvation was offered, not primarily as a proposition to be accepted by the mind, but as a way out of sin and guilt. The terms were definite and specific and called for action. Repentance and baptism both represent something which the sinner is to do. The background of this salvation of Pentecost was belief in Jesus as the Christ, and conviction of the sin of having rejected him; the centre of this salvation, so far as men were concerned, was action.

Repentance was a common term among the Jews. They were familiar with the call of their own prophets to repentance. They knew the meaning of the term. "Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations." Ezk. 14:6. "Therefore turn thou to thy God." Hos. 12:6. "And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God." Joel 2:13. The word "repent" suggested just one thing to the Jews—a turning around, the going in another direction, a complete change of attitude and life. This

word "repent" was constantly upon the lips of John the Baptist. Repentance was at the very heart of his message. When Jesus began his public ministry almost his very first words were, "The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye." He had used the word frequently in his conversations with His disciples, and after the resurrection, according to Luke, He had made this declaration in their presence: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Peter was on common ground with his audience when he used this term "repent," and what he was saying was simply this: "Reverse your judgments concerning Jesus of Nazareth, change your attitude toward Him. Turn completely around, and become just as zealous and loyal in your witness to His resurrection and His Lordship, as you were in your determination to crucify Him." This is exactly what the term "repentance" implied to those guilty Jews. They were already sorry for their sin. What they needed was action.

"Baptism" was also a common term among the Jews. It had been used among them as a "symbolic act of purification from heathen defilement." John the Baptist had used the rite to symbolize the moral purification necessary in preparation for the coming of the Kingdom. The baptism used by Jesus and His

disciples, though John the disciple declares that Jesus never baptized anyone Himself, was probably very much the same as that of John the Baptist. When Peter specified baptism as one of the necessary elements or terms in the salvation which he offered at Pentecost, he was talking about a rite which his hearers understood.

But there was a difference between the baptism of Pentecost and that which had gone before. John's baptism was an immersion in water following a genuine repentance, and was for the remission of sins. The baptism of Pentecost, in addition to these elements, was to be administered in the name of Jesus Christ and was to be followed by the gift of the Holy Spirit. These two additions to the practice of baptism could hardly have been started until the "resurrection and the ascension had finally convinced the disciples that Jesus was the Messiah," and until they had heard His promise of the coming of the Spirit. The baptism which Peter offered at Pentecost was a baptism "involving the formal confession of belief in Jesus as the Messiah and bringing incorporation into the circle of believers in him as such," and which "would be the pledge of a share in his Messianic Kingdom." The gift of the Holy Spirit which was to follow the action of repentance and baptism was to be an earnest of the share of those who became members of the Kingdom, "sealing

their places as called according to the prophecy of Joel and Isaiah, and conveying remission of sins."

Professor Benjamin W. Bacon, in "The Story of Jesus," has the following interesting and instructive comment to make upon baptism in the primitive Church:

"As regards the institution of baptism, adopted almost immediately after the origin of the resurrection faith, as a rite of initiation into the new brotherhood, we know what it meant to Paul. But there is a strange silence concerning its origin. Luke merely relates the fact that the Church did baptize into the name of Jesus, without one word as to when or why the rite was adopted, or on whose initiative. Mark merely makes the Baptist predict a baptism of the Spirit, to come after his own. The fulfilment of this prediction is not related. Matthew adds to the commission given by the risen Christ to the twelve a command to baptize 'into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,' but without any explanation of the significance of the rite. John maintains that Jesus' disciples even before Calvary had practised baptism, but he evidently means the rite instituted by the Baptist, for he clearly distinguishes Christian baptism as involving the gift of the Holy Spirit, a post-resurrection experience. If we turn to Paul and the sources employed by Luke in Acts, it becomes manifest that the rite was instituted from the earliest times, only a singular group of Johannine believers at Ephesus knowing nothing of it in its Christian form. Moreover, it is regarded as a rite of

adoption through which the believer acknowledging Jesus as 'Lord,' is in turn acknowledged by Him through the outpouring upon him of the Spirit which the risen Christ meditates from the Father. . . ."

Dr. John A. Broadus said years ago, "To have this ceremony (Christian baptism) performed upon ourselves in the name of Jesus Christ, or in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is a sort of an oath of allegiance or pledge of devotion to Him as our Saviour. . . . Hence it was a pleasant fancy of the early Christians to call baptism a *sacramentum*, the Roman soldier's oath of absolute devotion and obedience to his general; though the word 'sacrament' afterwards came gradually to be employed in applications and senses quite foreign to the New Testament." In Peter's Pentecost sermon, and in his offer of baptism as one of the specific elements in salvation, there is the implication that when one in baptism takes the oath of allegiance to Jesus Christ, he signs a pledge of devotion and loyalty to Christ, which secures for him an evidence of forgiveness and acceptance with God which he did not have before, and which cannot be obtained in any other way.

The expression, "for, or unto the remission of sins," is used frequently in the gospels. It was a Jewish conception. It signifies the putting away, or the complete washing away, of sins. "Though your

sins be as scarlet," says Isaiah, "they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." John the Baptist had preached repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, and when His disciples first saw Jesus they hailed Him as "the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Before the crucifixion, when Jesus sat with His disciples for the last time in the upper room, he said to them as he took the cup, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." After the resurrection He told these same men that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations." We do not know that Jesus ever connected baptism with the remission of sins, unless Mark 16:16 can be thus interpreted. But the early Christians did, and being as close to Jesus as they were, they undoubtedly had some good authority from Him for doing so. While some of our modern scholars seem to make a great deal out of the fact that Jesus did not say in so many words that His disciples were to baptize for the remission of sins, we do know that Jesus sanctioned the rite of baptism, was baptized Himself, and must have left some word with His followers which has not been recorded which justified them in their practice.

There has always been a deep-seated longing in the hearts of men for some assurance that the sins of the

past are blotted out. Practically the whole sacrificial system of the Old Testament centred around this idea. The definite act of baptism, according to Peter, was to give assurance to the sinner that the sins of the past were wiped out, and that he was thenceforth a corporate part of the Christian community. There is no hint in the New Testament that the primitive Christian community ever tried to make out of the rite of baptism the magic rite which some sections of the Church have made out of it in later days, or that it was ever administered to any except those who had professed faith in Jesus as the Christ, and had shown some evidence of genuine repentance. So far as the records go we may believe that only believers' baptism was practised in the early Church, and that baptism had no meaning unless preceded by both faith and repentance.

Just what was implied by the expression, "the gift of the Holy Spirit," we cannot say with certainty. Jesus had promised the Holy Spirit to those who had waited for Pentecost. Before His death, according to John, He had promised that the Spirit should become the possession of His disciples after He had ascended to the Father. Whether Peter in his statement on the Day of Pentecost referred to the Spirit which Jesus had promised as a comforter and guide into all truth, or to the peculiar power which came at Pentecost as a result of the Spirit, we cannot be sure.

The point of interest, and I think of importance, is this: whatever the gift of the Spirit implied, those who had been baptized in the name of Jesus could claim that gift for themselves. Those who had been baptized were assured that all Jesus had promised for His disciples through the Spirit was theirs.

The salvation of Pentecost is still needed. Our age needs a definite, clear-cut statement of the terms of salvation which Christianity has to offer men. In any programme for the evangelization of the non-Christian adult population of our communities, the acceptance of Jesus as the Christ must be urged. Salvation, in the Christian sense of that term, rests upon faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Then, when men and women have accepted the Christian evaluation of Jesus, and are convinced that they have been wrong in their estimate of Him and His work for men, the element of repentance must be stressed. In this case, repentance means simply the change of attitude toward Jesus, the genuine sorrow for having denied and rejected Him through the years which should have been dedicated to His service, and the open determination to dedicate the whole of life to Him and His cause in loyal service. The act which then demonstrates to the world the genuineness of this repentance, and which incorporates the one who has acknowledged Jesus as the Christ and changed the

whole attitude of his life toward Him, into the body of the believers or the Church is that of Christian baptism. There is still a genuine need for this ordinance of baptism in the Church.

And in regard to the "remission of sins" and the assurance of "the gift of the Holy Spirit," there is still great concern among earnest men and women in all the churches. In "The Crucifixion in Our Street," Dr. George Stewart says: "When Alexander Whyte of Free Saint George's, Edinburgh, was visiting his barrister friend, John Carment, the old gentleman looked up at the minister and said: 'Have ye any word for an old sinner?' Multitudes of thoughtful men and women turn to the Church of Christ with this same question. The sense of failure, remorse for damage done to the hearts and minds of others which is beyond repair, causes sensitive hearts to long for someone to wash the slate clean, to give them another chance." They believe in a vague way that God through Jesus Christ forgives, but when they have submitted to the ordinance of Christian baptism, somehow, they have a feeling of assurance of sins remitted, washed away, that they would not have otherwise. Just how the waters of baptism could wash away sins they do not know, and we cannot tell them; but that life looks different, and the past lies less heavy upon the soul, they know with a surety that defies all attempts at explanation.

Men and women still long for some definite assurance that the power of the Holy Spirit which wrought so mightily in the hearts of the early disciples, might be theirs. In the early Church this definite assurance was linked with Christian baptism. The how and the why are not explained, but the fact is unmistakably clear. The rank and file of those who accept Jesus as their Lord are not satisfied merely to hope that all Jesus promised through the Spirit will be theirs. They know nothing at all of that mysticism which has led certain great souls in the history of Christianity into a deep assurance of all these promises, seemingly without the aid of any religious externals. They want definite assurance. And so far as the New Testament is concerned the most definite assurance that the gift of the Holy Spirit is ours, is Christian baptism.

It remains now for us to make two important observations about this salvation of Pentecost. The first is, that the big element in it was action. In the mind of Peter the Christian offer of salvation was something to be acted upon by man, and acted upon immediately; and it was of such a nature that men could act upon it. The salvation of Pentecost was not an emotional experience which stirred up the souls of men and left them uncertain as to what they should do. It was a rational process issuing in definite action. Repentance and baptism were both some-

thing for men to do. Peter appealed primarily, not to the emotions of men, but rather to their wills. And in this method he was following the example of Jesus Himself in dealing with the souls of men. Undoubtedly Peter stirred the emotions of these men at Pentecost to their very depths, but He stirred also their intellects and wills. They not only felt about their sins; they thought and acted about them.

There is nothing which our modern Protestant evangelism needs more than this note of definiteness, and this appeal to action which was characteristic of the salvation of Pentecost, and of the whole evangelism of the primitive Church. The background of the older Protestant evangelism, and of much of the modern, is wholly different from that of the New Testament. In the Roman Catholic Church salvation depends upon absolute submission to the Church. The Protestant Reformers rebelled against this conception of salvation, but unfortunately, as Dr. F. D. Kershner points out, most of these men were "dominated by the doctrine of election, which really coloured their entire conception of the Church. This being true, only those were saved, from their point of view, who had been predestined from all eternity to salvation. Under such circumstances evangelism could only consist in acquainting the elect with the priceless assurance that they were among the number of the saved." With the Wesleys a new type of

Protestant evangelism came into being. The doctrine of election was repudiated. The basis of this new message was that "every man has the power to make sure his own salvation, if he wills to do so." This newer evangelism was characterized by an "appeal to the will, and by a new ethical note" which gave it tremendous power. Its weakness, and this has been the weakness of too much of our modern Protestant evangelism, was the assumption that "the only test of conversion was to be found in a mystical experience." This exalted the emotions above the intellect and the will in the acceptance of the terms of salvation.

The demand of our day is for some definite assurance of salvation which rests upon the intellect and the will rather than the emotions. People are asking now as those men at Pentecost asked, "What shall we do?" Pentecost offers an answer in the Twentieth Century, just as it did in the First Century, to this important question. We must meet men and women in the great crisis of their lives, when they are convinced that the Jesus whom they have neglected and rejected from childhood is the Son of God; when they are convicted of that sin and all the other sins it has led them into, and want some definite assurance of "remission" of those sins, and of acceptance into the circle of Christ's followers with all that that means; with a salvation that is

just as definite and specific as that which Peter offered at Pentecost; and that calls for definite action. We will never be able to explain all that is involved in repentance, baptism for the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. But we can urge men and women to act in such a way that a great assurance will come into their souls, and a new dynamic will come into their lives. This must be a vital part of any evangelistic message that will adequately meet the needs of our modern age.

The second observation is this: In our evangelism with and for children, especially those who have received instruction in our Church Schools, there are some elements in this Pentecost salvation which we do not need to stress. The background of salvation for children and adults is essentially different. Jesus said of children, "suffer little children to come unto me . . . for of such is the kingdom of God"; concerning adults he said, "The kingdom of God is at hand, repent," and "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." In the case of adults the background of salvation is that of a refusal through the years to accept Jesus as the Christ, and to acknowledge His claims upon life. In the case of the child it is the background of a genuine love for Jesus and a desire to become a follower of Him and His way of life. Against this background we would hardly be consistent in urging repentance for the sin of having re-

jected Jesus, or baptism for the remission of sins, unless we accept the old doctrine of original sin and infant damnation.

When a boy or a girl has had the proper instruction concerning the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, and come to the place where they want to acknowledge Him as their Lord, to ask them to repent would be to ask them to change their whole attitude toward Jesus. This is not what we want in the case of children. We want something that will confirm them in the attitude which they already have toward Jesus. Repentance, as Peter used it at Pentecost, has no place in our evangelism with boys and girls who have been properly instructed concerning Jesus Christ. And baptism for the remission of sins is just as meaningless. In our evangelism with boys and girls who have been taught to love Jesus, we must stress the ordinance of Christian baptism as one of dedication to this Jesus. It becomes the act through which they definitely take an open stand for Jesus as believers, and are incorporated into the body of believers in the Christian Church, rather than an act through which they are assured of the remission of their sins.

The salvation of Pentecost was offered to meet an immediate situation, and when that same situation arises, as it constantly does in the adult evangelism of the Church in every century, it is still the best we

know anything about. When the Church neglects or tries to explain away Acts 2:38, it is departing from one of the most powerful evangelistic messages in the New Testament. Looked upon as a rigid formula for every situation which may arise, this passage may do untold harm in the Church, but looked upon in its true setting and used to meet the situations for which it was given, it can become a mighty power in the evangelism of the Church.

CHAPTER VIII

THE AFTERMATH OF PENTECOST

The immediate results of the preaching of Pentecost with its stinging rebuke to the men who had been a party to the crucifixion of Jesus; its exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth as Christ and Lord; and its offer of a definite salvation based upon definite action on the part of those who had been convicted of sin, was a revival in which three thousand souls received the word of Peter, repented, were baptized, and were added to the Christian community. One of the important facts to note here is that this Pentecost revival, the first great revival in the history of the Church, came as the result of the prayers and expectancy of the disciples, and was preached rather than promoted. Three thousand people accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, repented of their sin of having rejected Him, and were baptized into His name; not because of a tremendous organization which had been functioning in advance; not because of a splendid publicity committee and life-sized pictures of the evangelist on every prominent billboard in Jerusalem; not because an army of personal work-

ers had dragged them down the "sawdust trail" to the music of a Pentecostal brass band and amid the cheers and applause of the multitude—but simply because they had been pricked to their hearts by the powerful preaching of Peter.

This same thing has been true through the history of the Church. Every really great revival of religion has come through mighty and powerful preaching and not through organization and promotion, however important these things may be. In our modern evangelism, organization and publicity and promotion are important factors and are useful when kept in their proper place. When they are put first and the message from the pulpit second, they are out of their place. The religion of Jesus Christ is constantly put to open shame by men without any real qualifications for the work of an evangelist, who, through a good organization and well-planned publicity, hold what we call a "great meeting." Our modern methods of promoting revivals and evangelistic campaigns are not producing Christians like those who were baptized at Pentecost, and they never will. When we build our evangelism around great preaching, preaching that has Jesus Christ at its heart and that does not specialize in knocking every thing and every body under the sun and descend to the low plane of vulgarism and a cheap sensationalism, the results will be equally great. I recently heard an evangelist with

a nation-wide reputation stand before an audience of over a thousand people and waste forty minutes in a manner most disgusting to any intelligent person, when he might have been preaching the gospel that Peter preached at Pentecost. There may not be anything in the kind of a message Peter delivered at Pentecost that would get on the front page of the modern newspapers, but there is something in it that will convict men of their sins, and make out of them Christians who will count for something in the life of the Church.

If the Pentecost Christians had stopped at their baptism, as most of our present-day Christians do, there would have been just two chapters in the book of Acts. The events which are recorded in the other chapters would never have happened. But these Christians did not stop there. "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need. And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the

people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved."

This is a moving picture of the early Church. It was a Church in action. There is ample material in these seven verses for several months' preaching. Notice a few of the descriptive terms that stand out in this picture. "They continued," they kept at it, they worked on the job as Christians. They were "steadfast" in the apostles' teaching and in their temple worship. They knew the meaning of "fellowship," and they enjoyed that fellowship in the breaking of bread, which in all probability refers to the Lord's Supper, and in prayer. In the presence of the signs and wonders which were done through the apostles "fear" came upon them, or more accurately, "they stood in awe." They were reverent in the presence of spiritual power. That unity which had bound the disciples together before Pentecost seems to have been carried over into this larger group, for "all that believed were together" and worshipped "with one accord."

So intimate were the unity and fellowship of those who were baptized at Pentecost, that they practised what seems to have been a temporary community of goods. They "had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need." These Pentecost Christians were not practising what we know to-day

as economic communism. Their motive was not economic at all. Their community of goods grew out of the common needs of those who were united in a common spiritual enterprise, and not out of any desire to establish a new or different economic system. Economic communists who have used the early Church as an argument in their favour have missed the whole meaning of this event. So far as we can discover, the early Christians believed that Christ was coming back immediately, and they were, in their practice of the community of goods, simply pooling their interests in waiting for that event. They were practising communism not in order that they might have more goods, but because they felt that the time was rapidly approaching when they would not need any goods at all. The economic motive was entirely lacking. These early Christians soon found out that they were mistaken in their belief in the immediate return of Christ, and when the Church began to go out and witness for Christ rather than wait for His coming, we hear nothing more of communism as an accepted part of their community life. They still had many things in common, and looked after the widows and orphans and those who could not obtain the necessities of life; but no specific economic system was worked out which could be used for all time to come. Christianity, when it has been at all genuine, has always created a community

of interest which the outside world cannot understand.

There was a gladness and joyousness about primitive Christianity which gave it tremendous power. These Pentecost Christians "took their food with gladness" and they were continually "praising God." Dr. John A. Hutton says: "The one thing which we are conscious of in the Church of the first days is its happiness, its spirit of praise and singing . . . If proof were needed that something had taken place immediately after the crucifixion of Jesus—something new, something amazing in its utter goodness—it is to be found in the happy faces, in the willing hands and feet of those early disciples. We cannot read a page that treats of those early days without feeling the vibration in the air, the stir, the gladness, the sudden sense of the nearness of the unseen world—of God and Christ and the Holy Spirit." As a result of the joyous and consistent living of these Pentecost Christians we read that they found favour with the people, and the Lord added a continuous stream of new life to their community.

The early Church became powerful because those who were baptized went out and lived like baptized Christians ought to live. With a few exceptions, the world could tell the difference between a person who had been baptized and one who had not. These early Christians did not admit apologetically, when they

were forced to, that they had been baptized and were members of the Christian community. When they mingled with a group of pagans there was something about them that was different. Their very presence created a different atmosphere.

Very often, in the long history of the Church, its leaders have been more interested in baptizing people, than in urging that they live like baptized people ought to live. When we read history and discover that some of our ancestors were practically forced to be baptized, we are not surprised at the type of Christianity which they produced. E. Stanley Jones points out one striking example in "The Christ of the Indian Road." The Saxons, a warring tribe of Europe, and our ancestors, "were practically compelled by Charlemagne to become Christians. They consented on one condition. That condition would only be known at the time of their baptism. When these warriors were put under the water as a symbol that their old life was dead, they went under—all except their right arms. They held them out, lifted above their heads. These were their fighting arms. They were never Christianized! Is it to be wondered at that war continues in the West in spite of Christianity? It came in with it." From the way many baptized people live to-day it looks as if they have either decided to ignore their baptism altogether, or else they went under with a good many reservations.

From the way most people support the Church financially, based upon a comparison with what they spend for other things, we may be quite sure that they held their pocketbooks and check books out of the water when they were baptized.

Many things seem to indicate that the Church in our day is more interested in the number of people it gets baptized, than in the way these people live after they are baptized. We set our aims for so many baptisms in a certain period of time and urge people to be baptized just to help us reach those aims. Because our evangelists are rated by the number of people they get baptized, they resort to all kinds of methods, even urging people through their personal workers to be baptized because it will please the evangelist. The preacher who keeps his baptistry full all the time is always in demand among the churches. With what result? Our Church rolls are padded with thousands of baptized people, but when you check up on them they do not count at all in the life of the Church. The evangelist says it is the fault of the local pastor, that he should line these people up and put them to work. Perhaps some of the fault lies there. But why should the local pastor be forced to spend all his time for a year in hunting up and urging people who have been baptized as the result of a special meeting, to support the Church, if they knew why they were baptized in the beginning. The results of

the average evangelistic meeting in a Church, rather than becoming an asset to the life of the Church, simply become an added burden upon the shoulders of an already overburdened pastor. People who have been baptized under the high-pressure methods of much of our modern evangelism, and in many cases simply to satisfy the vanity of the evangelist and his desire for numbers, do not count for much in the local Church, no matter how faithful the local pastor may be. And it does not become an evangelist, who very often takes as much money for one campaign as some poor pastor gets in a whole year working on the job every day, to lay too much of the blame for the inadequate results of our modern evangelism upon that pastor. I have preached in several communities where there were enough baptized people to make a congregation as large as the one which I served, but they were not interested enough in the Christ into whose name they had been baptized even to identify themselves with His Church. I do not care if people have been baptized a hundred times, if they are not manifesting in their lives some of the qualities of these Pentecost Christians, they are a dead weight upon the Church and the Kingdom of God.

The Church in America has baptized enough people in the last five years literally to turn America upside down morally and spiritually, if these people

had gone out to live like baptized people ought to live. The trouble has been that through a perverted view of New Testament evangelism we have baptized people with the view of giving them a free ticket to heaven, rather than committing them to the Christian way of living here on earth. And in spite of all those we have baptized the level of spiritual life in most of our Churches is alarmingly low, and we are still crying for adequate funds to maintain our organized work.

Christianity is on trial before the world to-day. It is not "having favour with all the people." It will never become really effective in human life and human society until those who have been baptized into the name of Jesus Christ will determine to live like baptized Christians ought to live. Every great evil which preys upon human life in our day, and threatens to undermine our most sacred institutions, is helped along by the tolerance, or even the open protection of baptized people. For years a group of baptized business men in every community, good deacons and elders in the churches, stood squarely in the way of the Prohibition victory because they said it would hurt their business to vote dry. Under Prohibition many of this same group wink at the open violation of the law for business or political reasons, and baptized local officials and representatives and senators and governors put their approval upon the ap-

pointment of enforcement officers whom they know to be enemies of Prohibition. Baptized judges upon the bench make a joke of the Constitution of the United States, baptized lawyers defend bootleggers for gain, and baptized juries turn them loose because of business or political reasons.

In the industrial world men break down, and where the law can possibly be evaded or in states where there are no compensation laws, they are cast aside by baptized people as so many pieces of broken machinery. Mothers work long hours in factories and stores that are owned by baptized people, and girls are forced to sell themselves for gain because their baptized employers do not pay a living wage. Little children work on from year to year to become forever stunted in body, mind, and soul, while baptized owners of mills that employ child-labour and baptized congressmen and senators effectively block every move for a federal child-labour law. And in every one of our great American cities people live like animals herded into reeking tenements that are owned by baptized people.

Our American cities are filled with crime and corruption unspeakable. They are also filled with magnificent churches and thousands of baptized people. Yet, these baptized Christians either by their deliberate actions, or by their utter indifference, suffer these conditions to exist. If you mention the

prohibition or the limiting of the sale of firearms as a curb to crime, the baptized men who manufacture and sell firearms stand in your way. If you say anything about the crime that is being paraded nightly before the young people upon the picture screen, the baptized men who own the shows or the buildings in which they operate are in the way of doing anything to remedy the situation. There is scarcely one evil or corrupt practice in our modern life which is not being either directly or indirectly helped along and protected by baptized people who are interested because of personal gain.

And in the seething mass of pleasure-seekers which throngs our streets and highways, our theatres, banquet halls, and resorts, can you tell any difference between the baptized and the un-baptized? When our baptized modern Christians mingle with the pagan throng, as thousands of them do, can these pagans notice that they are any different, and do they create an atmosphere that is different? It is the absolute and unrestricted indulgence of modern Christians in our paganized pleasures that is sapping the spiritual life of the home and the Church and bringing disgrace upon Christianity. When New Year's Eve came on Sunday evening a few years ago, Prohibition officers entered the banquet hall of an exclusive hotel in one of our large cities and attempted to arrest those who were drinking. They were driven out and

their lives even threatened by the enraged crowd. Who were these people who could openly and shamelessly desecrate the Lord's Day, flout and violate the Constitution of the United States, and try to mob duly appointed officers of the law who were trying to do their duty? Prominent members, many of them, of the leading churches of that city. And a desperate attempt was made to run several ministers out of their pulpits because they openly protested against the action of their members. Their defence was that it was none of their preacher's business how they acted so long as they paid his salary. It was reported that several perfectly good orthodox, baptized preachers raised no voice of protest at all for fear of losing their jobs.

The time has come to put the emphasis where it belongs in our preaching and teaching, and we cannot look for any better days in the Church until we do. Let us remember that the first outstanding factor in the aftermath of Pentecost was a group of baptized men and women living in the midst of a pagan civilization like baptized people ought to live, and by their type of living commending their religion favourably to all men, putting paganism to shame, and turning their world upside down.

Another important factor in the aftermath of Pentecost was a group of preachers with a definite, clear-cut message of salvation for their age. These

men confronted the paganism of their day with an uncompromising and imperious challenge. When they were questioned and threatened concerning a man who had been made whole through their ministry, their leader, Peter, said: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in Him doth this man stand here before you whole. He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner. And in none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved."

There was a note of uncompromising exclusiveness in the preaching that followed the Day of Pentecost. What the apostles claimed for Jesus Christ, an absolutely solitary and unshared significance, in the presence of the Jews, they claimed for Him before the whole world. For them there were not half a dozen redeemers; not half a dozen ways of salvation; but one way and one saving name. "Christianity to the apostles was not a competitive religion; it was the one absolute religion. The world to which they preached was full of various kinds of religions. People worshipped at the shrines of a thousand different deities. The apostles refused to admit the truth of any one of these religions, or the real exist-

ence of any one of these thousand deities. There was but one salvation, and one Name through which that salvation could be obtained."

Dr. J. D. Jones points out the fact that it was this intolerance of primitive Christianity that involved it in all the persecutions through which it was forced to pass. He says:

"People adopted the gods of other nations and added them to their own. Rome would have done the same thing to Christianity had the Christians been willing. The Christians were exposed to the fierce persecutions of the early centuries because they were not satisfied that Christianity should be regarded as just one means, one method of approach to God. Christianity was not satisfied with a place; it demanded the whole place. It was not content to be regarded as one mode of addressing deity; it was the only mode. It refused to go shares with any other religion. It set out deliberately to displace them. It was intolerant of a rival. But if the intolerance of Christianity involved it in fierce and bitter persecution, it lent a might, passion, and zeal to its preachers. The apostles, as they faced the sick and wretched world of the First Century, believed simply and implicitly that in the gospel they preached they had the one healing for the world's hurt and the one cure for its woe. They believed that in the Christ they could claim that they had the only Saviour. It was this that sent them to the ends of the earth; it was this that lent urgency to their message and passion to their speech."

Does the Church to-day have this same urgency, passion, and intolerance in its evangelistic and missionary message? We are moving toward a larger tolerance in the Church in many ways, and this is as it should be. But can we afford to be too tolerant at this one point? Did the apostles claim too much for Jesus Christ? If not, do we dare claim any less for him? I believe the Church of to-day, without doing violence in any way to that larger tolerance which we must have in many of our relationships, can afford to be just as intolerant concerning the solitary and unshared significance of Jesus Christ as a Saviour, as the primitive Church was. In our missionary work among the non-Christian populations of the earth, while recognizing all that is good in their present religions, we cannot admit that their gods are just as powerful as the God of Jesus Christ, or that there is salvation for them in any other name than His name. While acknowledging all that is good in the many organizations in our own civilization which attract men and women, we cannot admit that for some the lodge will do just as well as the Church, and continue to give men who have never accepted Christ as a Saviour all the hope and honour in their death which we give to Christians. The lodges and the clubs are all right so far as they go, but there is no promise of salvation for any man or woman in any lodge or club.

The claim of these early preachers who went out to witness for Christ following the Day of Pentecost still represents the essential claim of the Church of Jesus Christ. "At the very heart of the Christian Church, making it a Church, kindling its passions, prompting its evangelistic labours, lending to those labours intensity and urgency, there lies this conviction that in Jesus Christ it possesses the one cure for the world's woe." When the Church loses this conviction, and, in any community, comes down to the level of a mere competitive agency seeking to win men on any other basis than the salvation of their souls, and the claiming of their whole lives in Christian service, it loses its power to conquer.

CHAPTER IX

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF PENTECOST

The implications of Pentecost are many. In our discussions thus far we have suggested and dealt with many of the most important ones. There is one which is vital to the life of the Church which we have not mentioned directly—the missionary implication; and there is one which we have already emphasized which deserves further emphasis—the evangelistic implication. The primitive Church was a growing Church because it was a going Church. A Church that is not growing cannot live, and a Church that is not going cannot grow. Perhaps the two outstanding implications of Pentecost are that Christianity is an evangelistic and a missionary religion.

In the introduction to "Evangelism in the Modern World," edited by two University men, are these significant paragraphs revealing the fact that these two important implications of Pentecost are uppermost in the minds of the most thoughtful and far-seeing leaders of our day:

"Evangelism is at once the primary work of the Church and the most urgent need of the hour. It is

hardly possible to exaggerate its urgency or to overestimate its importance. The Church of Jesus Christ may cultivate a reverent and brilliant scholarship, maintain an inspiring and progressive ministry of teaching, and achieve a dignity and beauty of worship appealing to the most æsthetic taste. She may acquire a social conscience keenly sensitive to the needs and problems of the hour, an outlook at once broadly catholic and deeply sympathetic, and a charity sufficient to excite the admiration of the most fastidious. But if she fails to display a vigorous and living evangelism, she has failed in her essential and ultimate mission, and the days of her influence are numbered."

"Christianity is nothing if not a missionary religion. Only the Church that lives by capture can hope to live at all. It is the first business of the Church to make Jesus Christ known in the fullness of His personality and the wonder of His power, to ring out the challenge of His Kingdom, and to summon men by persistent and impassioned appeal not merely to embrace His ideals, but to enter His fellowship and give themselves in glad abandon to His service."

"The evangelism of to-day will fail in its purpose unless it comes to men with a message at once fresh and compelling—a message instinct with spiritual power and beauty, embracing the eternal truths of Christianity, and applying them with spiritual insight to the problems of the hour. What we need to-day, and need supremely, is a daring application of the mind and teaching of Christ to the whole field of contemporary life. . . . Evangelism has been un-

der a cloud. It has been associated with a crudity of thought and expression, a sensational method and a purely emotional appeal, to which thoughtful men could not conscientiously subscribe. It has been identified with all that is most reactionary in the life and thought of the Church; with a blind literalism and an obstinate obscurantism that have repelled enlightened minds in every communion; with an unlovely dogmatism altogether alien to the spirit and teachings of Jesus Christ. The time has come to rescue evangelism from the stigma which such associations have inevitably cast upon it, and to reinstate it in its rightful place in the outlook and the affections of the people."

A return to the simple evangelism of Pentecost and the primitive Church will go a long way toward restoring the evangelistic passion in the modern Church, and it will give a type of evangelism to the Church which will be far more acceptable to the modern mind than the evangelism which has been common among Protestants. The evangelism of Pentecost was essentially the evangelism of Jesus Himself, and it was a rational evangelism. It was, as we have said, an appeal to the minds and wills of men, offering definite and specific things to be believed and done on the part of men, and promising definite and specific results in the lives of men.

Jesus Christ had a very definite ideal for the life of the race. One cannot read the gospels with any

measure of intelligence at all without being convinced of this fact. One of the most valuable studies of "The Ideal of Jesus" that has ever been made is that by William Newton Clarke. In the beginning of that study he says:

"Every far-reaching scheme of life looks onward to an ideal, which represents its aspirations and inspires its activity. Every far-reaching mind seeking to influence men, holds its ideal aloft as the banner of the march it leads. Jesus had his ideal; he had his conception of what life ought to be, and of what he supremely desired that it might become. The vision floated before him of life rightly allied to the powers above and rightly exercised upon the plane of its being; of life personal, expressed in all such character and conduct as are worthiest of men, and of life social, wrought out in all such spirit and service as make the best and most successful world. It was an ideal for men and for man, for the life of men and the life of man, all held in true relation to God the source and end of all. It was in the light of this ideal that Jesus uttered every word of his teaching, and wrought every work of help, and gave himself to and for the world. To bring this ideal to reality he lived and died, and this ideal represents his contribution to humanity. . . ."

What was and is this ideal of Jesus? I think it can best be stated in words which were constantly upon His lips during His earthly ministry, "The Kingdom of Heaven," or "The Kingdom of God." Almost end-

less interpretations have been put upon this expression, and with them we cannot concern ourselves now. Two things are evident from a careful reading of both the Old and New Testament passages concerning the Kingdom: First, that the expression was old when Jesus came, and that it had for a long time embodied the ideal of the Jews for the coming reign of God among men; Second, that reduced to its simplest meaning, as Jesus used it, it meant a perfected human society in which God should reign supreme, and in which His will would be executed as perfectly on earth as it is in heaven. This is not by any means an exhaustive statement of the meaning of this expression, but it is enough for our present purposes. The Hebrew prophets had dreamed of the universal reign of God in a material way; the whole Hebrew nation expected God to intervene as a conquering God, subject all their enemies unto them, and make Jerusalem the centre of the earth. Jesus dreamed of something vaster than all this. For Him God was to establish on earth a perfected human society in which His will should be supreme, and which would be so nearly akin to heaven, that the one would eventually dissolve into the other. It was the most daring dream, the most marvellous ideal, this world has ever known.

But Jesus was something more than an idealist. He had something more to offer the world than a fine

ideal which men could dream about. He had a keen sense of those forces in human society which must be destroyed before His ideal could be realized, and He had a method whereby He hoped to make His ideal effective. It is just here that Jesus differs from most of the world's great idealists and reformers. There has been no end to the ideals which have been offered for a perfected human society, but they have all had one common weakness. They have been based upon the assumption that when once the ideal plan is put into practice, immediately all barriers in the way of its working would disappear, and human individuals, as if by magic, would begin to manifest those traits of character essential to the working of this ideal plan. Both history and human experience have proven this assumption to be false. The most glaring example of this fundamental weakness of all proposed ideals for a perfected human society, save that of Jesus, is to be seen in the long history of Socialism in its various forms. Socialism has not been a success, and it can never be a success, because, in spite of its many good qualities, it is based upon a false philosophy.

In order that Jesus might realize His ideal He proposed two things: First, He would attack and deal a death blow to sin, the one power which had wrecked the hopes of His people, and the one barrier which stood squarely across the path of His own ideal;

Second, in those individuals who have been saved from the power of sin He proposed to create a new type of character which would make them fit for citizenship in His perfected human society, and make the creation of that society possible.

In the very beginning of His ministry Jesus attacked sin. And for Him sin was not an intellectual problem for the theologians to debate about. Sin, in the eyes of Jesus, was that power in human life which caused men to be lost; it is that which perverts the finest passions of the soul, that which causes men to miss the mark, the final purpose and aim of all personality. Jesus had very little to say about the guilt for sin. He came to save people from sin itself, and not from the wrath of an angry God who had turned His face from men because of guilt. Rather, He came to show men the face of a loving God who had grieved because they had missed the way of life through sin. Jesus knew that men were guilty before God because they had missed the mark in life, and forgiveness for that guilt is one of the big elements in His salvation; but they were guilty in the sense that they were children who had disappointed the hopes of their Father and had failed to claim their divine inheritance, and not in the sense of criminals before a supreme Judge.

It was not the fact that men were guilty as sinners that stood in the way of the realization of the ideal

which Jesus had for the world; it was the fact of sin itself, as the supreme destructive agency in human life, that stood in the way. The redemptive message of Jesus was a message of the forgiveness of sins; but it was something more than this. Men, even though they are conscious of the forgiveness of their past sins, yet, sitting down and doing nothing but contemplating that fact, can never bring about the Kingdom of God on earth as Jesus had it in mind. Jesus recognized sin for the ugly, destructive thing that he found it to be in the lives of men. As Dr. Glover says: "Jesus is quite definite that sin is nothing accidental—it is involved in man's own nature, in his choice, it comes from the heart, and it speaks of a heart that is wrong. . . . Sin is tracked home to the inmost and most essential part of man—his will. . . . The man (who sins) uses his highest God-given faculties, and uses them against God. . . . What, we ask, did Jesus mean by the 'lost'? This, above all, that sin cuts men adrift from God."

The whole plan of redemption, or salvation from the power of sin in human life which Jesus proposed, was proposed in order that this greatest of all barriers to the realization of his ideal might be removed. When Jesus died on the cross, when He paid the supreme price for His ideal, He did something more than make reconciliation between man and God possible—He actually did something which, if we

have faith enough to believe it and act upon it, destroyed the power of sin to cause man forever to miss the mark in life, and to be cut adrift eternally from the Living God.

With the barrier of sin removed, Jesus is free to put into human life the roots of a type of life which will make the larger programme of the Kingdom workable. In the plan of Jesus redemption comes first, and the full-grown Christian character follows. He saw very clearly that men could never meet His moral and ethical demands, demands which were and are absolutely essential to that type of character which alone can make his ideal practical, unless they were redeemed from the power of sin. Just here many people have misunderstood the moral and ethical demands of Jesus. They were not made upon all men. Jesus only expected those men and women who had been saved from the power of sin to realize His moral and ethical standards. The ethical message of Jesus divorced from His redemptive mission is an impossible message for any age or any people. The man who has never been redeemed from the perverting and destructive power of sin through Jesus Christ, who has never felt the power of that supreme will working upon his own will, is expecting the impossible when he expects to meet the ethical and moral demands of Jesus. But, after men have been redeemed, Jesus outlines a way of life and illustrates

it by His own example, which will produce that type of perfected human individual which alone can make possible the success of his ideal for a perfected human society.

The evangelism of Pentecost looked toward the realization of this ideal of Jesus. The preacher of Pentecost put repentance first in his message because he was facing a group of men who had crucified Jesus of Nazareth because of their sin. And repentance in the mind of Peter and his hearers, as we have already suggested, meant just one thing—a change of attitude toward Jesus. In the Great Commission to the disciples there was the specific instruction to lay upon the hearts of all those who were baptized into the name of Jesus the necessity of "observing all things" whatsoever Jesus had commanded them. All that Jesus had impressed upon the lives of the disciples about the Kingdom of God and the ethical and moral demands of citizenship in that Kingdom (see the Sermon on the Mount) is included in this part of this final command of Jesus. While Jesus companied with the disciples during the forty days of His post-resurrection existence on earth He was constantly speaking to them of the "things concerning the Kingdom of God." Following the specific and definite instructions which Peter gave concerning salvation in his Pentecost sermon it is said that "with many other words he

testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation." Undoubtedly, from the type of living which was manifest in that early Christian community, Peter urged upon his Pentecost hearers the ideal of Jesus and the things concerning the Kingdom of God. There is no evidence that evangelism and the attempt to realize the Kingdom of God, the ideal of Jesus, were separated in the early Church.

One of the tragedies of the modern Church is the lack of unity between the leaders in evangelism, and those who call themselves advocates of the social gospel. Never has the passion for the social gospel been so strong and insistent as it is to-day. In fact, the so-called social gospel is simply the statement of the ideal of Jesus for a perfected human society; for the supremacy of the reign of God in our human relationships. But many of the most ardent advocates of the social gospel seem to forget the means which Jesus employed for the realization of this gospel. They are so fired by their passion for social justice, in a world where injustice is everywhere manifest; so absorbed in their attempt to realize the Kingdom of God on earth, that they have largely forgotten about the type of citizenship which is necessary to make that Kingdom actually work on earth. They are working from the top down, rather than as Jesus proposed to do, from the bottom up.

On the other hand, we have those who are fired with an intense evangelistic passion. They know that the redemptive mission of Jesus was central in His thought. They are sweeping thousands of people into His Church each year. But many of them are talking more about salvation from the guilt of sin, and getting men and women ready for heaven, than about salvation from sin itself and preparation for citizenship in the Kingdom. Under certain types of evangelistic preaching which are yet popular, there are people who are led to join the Church in much the same fashion, and with much the same motives, that they would have in writing ahead for reservations at a hotel, or in taking out a life-insurance policy. In the intensity of even our more modern evangelism we are inclined to forget that in the mind of Jesus redemption was not an end in itself.

Dr. A. Herbert Gray says in his chapter in "Evangelism in the Modern World," in speaking of the relation of evangelism and the Kingdom of God:

"Experience shows that it is very possible for men to take home to themselves a message concerning forgiveness, and to enter on a life delivered from some old sin, and yet to retain in other respects their old mental attitudes. People who describe themselves as 'saved' are often found still full of revengeful feelings, and still believing in methods of force and violence in handling the world's affairs. Many of them remain

full of class prejudice. And thus the Church composed of such people fails to maintain the witness of Christ, and is found wanting by the world in its great hours of need . . . the root of all the trouble lies in the fact that the Churches have been recruited by an evangelism which offered men something far short of the full Gospel of the Kingdom. That evangelism has made it seem far too easy a thing to be a Christian. It has encouraged men and women to try to live through life on the basis of one spiritual experience without following it up by a learning of Christ. . . ."

The aftermath of Pentecost is evidence that the early Church preached an evangelistic message which did not ignore the ideal of Jesus for the reign of God in the lives of men. Men and women who were possessed with the ideal of simply being baptized and going to heaven could never have worked the revolution in the life and thought of their age which these early Christians did. In the programme of Jesus Himself, and in the programme of the primitive Church there was room for all those points of emphasis over which men divide to-day. There is room in the Christian Church to-day for the most ardent advocates of the social gospel, and there is room for evangelism with all its splendid passion. But the advocates of the social gospel must remember that while they may have given to the world the most perfect statement of the ideal of Jesus which it has ever had, it is going to take a finer type of Christian

character to make their interpretation of the gospel effective than the world has ever seen. And that type of character can only be developed in men and women who have been redeemed, who have been baptized into the name of Jesus Christ and taught the way of life in Him. The social gospel can only become effective when its advocates enter into the heartiest coöperation and fellowship with those who are interested in the redemptive mission of Jesus. And those who are interested in evangelism must remember that unless they are seeking to save men that they might assume the responsibilities and obligations of citizenship in the Kingdom of God, they are missing the whole aim of Jesus in His redemptive mission.

It is well to notice that in the evangelism of Pentecost nothing was said directly about heaven or the future life. What place did these ideas have in the ideal of Jesus? What place should they have in our modern evangelism? If we have interpreted the ideal of Jesus at all correctly, what Jesus proposes is an order of human society which approaches so nearly to our ideal of heaven that the old dividing line between earth and heaven shall entirely disappear, a condition in which life will no longer be thought of as made up of two detached existences, but of one continuous whole. In the New Testament eternal life is not a problem of the future, but a gift of God to the present world through Jesus Christ.

"This is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." How are we to attain unto this knowledge of God and Jesus which is life eternal? "And hereby we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." Jesus Christ lived this eternal life daily when He was on earth. He was in the world, but He belonged to eternity. In the realization of His ideal, in His redemptive mission, and in His ethical and moral demands upon those who had been redeemed, He was trying to lift the souls of men into a fellowship of immortality with Himself. "Because I live, ye shall live also," was one of his greatest sayings. And one who was very close to the Master is reported to have said toward the close of a long life of service for Him, "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren."

Thus, as Professor Peabody says: "The fundamental question concerning life and death is not, 'Shall I after death enter into another?' but, 'Am I alive now, with a spiritual vitality which is free from the vicissitudes of the body, and has the quality of timelessness?' In a word, the New Testament sets the spiritual world over against the sensuous world. Whenever, and in so far as, one passes from slavery to the flesh to the freedom of the spirit, he has already passed from death into life and satisfied the conditions of continuity." This simply means that if we

have prepared ourselves and others for citizenship in that perfected human society which Jesus came to establish, we have made ready for whatever the conception of heaven may stand for in our minds. It also means that in any evangelism which is true to the New Testament and the message of the primitive Church, there is no place for that cheap appeal to the emotions of men which seeks to win them by playing upon their desire to go to heaven when they die that they might meet some loved one who is there. Any evangelism which bases its appeal upon the selfish desire of men to escape punishment for sins committed in the flesh, and to have an easy place in heaven, is a cheap evangelism, and cannot but make cheap Christians. The genuine Christian has a wonderful hope of heaven and has every reason to believe that in that heaven he "shall know even as he is known." But this hope comes because of a life lived in the service of the Christ himself, and not because he has subscribed to all the items in a formula which has been prescribed by some evangelist. When the evangelist brings a man into a Church through the appeal that when he dies he will go to heaven, and leaves the impression that there is nothing further for him to do on earth, he loads a liability rather than an asset upon the Church and the Kingdom of God. In the average Church you do not have to go very far to find plenty of these liabilities.

Quoting again from "Evangelism in the Modern World":

"The evangelism of to-day must take account alike in its message and its method of the fact and the power of sin. . . . It must recapture the great vision of the Kingdom that dominated the minds of the Hebrew prophets and coloured so much of the outlook and teaching of Jesus Christ Himself. The Kingdom of God must be preached in such a way that men will find themselves confronted by the glaring contrast between the ideal of Jesus and the facts of modern life, arrested by its splendid and insistent challenge, and summoned to its service as the only endeavour worthy of their manhood or adequate to their powers."

We believe the evangelism of Pentecost offers the way toward the realization of these aims and purposes for the Church, and that when men catch the vision of redemption through Jesus Christ issuing in such a life as the early Church lived, they can bring about another Pentecost.

The disciples waited for the power which Jesus promised with these words ringing in their ears, "Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Peter ended his sermon on the Day of Pentecost with these words, "For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar

off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him."

From the very beginning, whether its earliest advocates caught the full significance of the fact or not, Christianity has been a world religion. It was so in the mind of Jesus. All the accounts of his final word to His disciples verify this conclusion. The Book of Acts tells the story of how the Pentecost Christians went everywhere preaching the gospel, and of the expansion of the Church under the leadership of their converts. It was the missionary passion that saved the early Church from degenerating into a mere Jewish sect. It was the missionary ideal and challenge of Christianity that gave Paul a task worthy of his intellect and zeal. When Paul set himself to the task of extending the frontiers of the Kingdom to all nations, he caught the very genius of the religion of Jesus Christ and immediately the old walls of class and race and prejudice began to crumble, and the first note in the crusade which had for its ultimate aim the unity of the race in Christ was sounded. When the Church has sounded that note faithfully and persistently, walls have always crumbled and the cause of human brotherhood has been advanced. Christianity has lived and prospered only because time and again in its long history it has gone back to its beginnings to read afresh Jesus' last charge to His disciples, and to catch the missionary glow and

enthusiasm of those who received power on the Day of Pentecost to carry out the commission of their Risen Lord for their age. When Christianity loses its missionary passion, when its field of labour becomes anything less than the whole world, it will lose its power and influence among men. The Christianity of Pentecost was a Christianity that will not let men rest until every nation has had an opportunity to accept Jesus of Nazareth as both Christ and Lord and make an honest effort to realize His ideal of the Kingdom.

The present missionary task of the Church is a very difficult and complicated one. It no longer represents merely a conflict between the religion of Jesus and the other great religions of the world. At the very heart of the modern missionary task is that conflict between the materialistic and the spiritual interpretation of life. The missionary on the field to-day is not only confronted with the problem of interpreting the religion of Jesus Christ against the background of heathenism, but against the background of a heathenism that has been changed for the worse by our Western materialism. The commercial and industrial impact of the West upon the non-Christian lands has complicated the task of the missionary, rather than helped him to solve his problems. Most of the problems which the missionaries face to-day, especially in China, have been

created by the very civilization which they are supposed to represent. Not only is the Church faced with the task of making Christians out of the so-called heathen, but of making Christians out of the representatives of our Western civilization who deal with these heathen in a commercial way. The missionary task of the modern Church, even on the foreign field, is no longer a foreign task. The Church would do well to heed these words from the message of the World Missionary Conference to the Church: "There is an imperative spiritual demand that national life and influence as a whole be Christianized, so that the entire impact, commercial and political, now of the West upon the East, and now of the stronger races upon the weaker, may confirm and not impair the message of the missionary enterprise."

Again, if we are to accept the truth of the statements of E. Stanley Jones in "The Christ of the Indian Road," and of many other missionaries and missionary leaders, the missionary task of the modern Church is further complicated by the refusal of many of the educated leaders in the non-Christian lands to accept our Western interpretation of Christianity. If what these men say is true, the day of any purely denominational or national missionary programme on the foreign fields is past forever. All the missionary work that has been done with the motive of fastening our Western denominationalism upon

the East must be done over again. There is just one demand that comes from the non-Christian lands to the Western Church to-day and that is for Jesus Christ Himself and His gospel. The great names in the history of the Western Church around which our denominational Christianity has been built are absolutely meaningless to the East. But that Name "which is above every name," which was exalted at Pentecost, and which was central in the message and life of the primitive Church, has proven itself to be compellingly attractive in the East.[8] Our Western divisions are not attracting men and women in the non-Christian lands, but, as has been the case over and over again in the home-land, are actually driving them away from the Church. The Church is doomed to utter failure in its missionary task to-day unless it can go forward in a united way. No matter if all the missionary property in China is destroyed before the Chinese find themselves and establish a stable government, the Church will have gained immeasurably if, when it goes back into China, it goes as the Church of Jesus Christ and with a united programme. It would be a great step forward in the missionary work of the Church if, here in America, the membership of the great religious bodies which have been doing work in China, would say to their missionary representatives: "We refuse absolutely to contribute

[8]See "The Christ of the Indian Road," by E. Stanley Jones.

another cent for work in China if it is to be built up again on the old denominational lines. But if we can pool our interests and go into China as the Church of Jesus Christ of America, with an interpretation of Christianity that gives the Chinese people a right to work out some things for themselves, then we are back of that kind of a missionary programme with all we are and all we have." This conclusion has been confirmed by the testimony of a splendid Christian physician who has just returned from a trip through China.

The primitive Church presented a solid front to the Roman Empire and won the first great victory for Christianity. And we know, if we are willing to face the facts of history, what the primary elements were in the message that made this victory possible. The Church will never win the last great victory of its career, the bringing of all the peoples of the earth to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, until it again presents a solid front to the world. Perhaps the most effective piece of missionary work the modern Church can do, is to face frankly the causes of its own weakness and division, and seek to heal itself.

The disciples received power because they took the world-challenge of their Master seriously. There are yet very many people in our churches who have not taken the Great Commission seriously, at least, not seriously enough to act upon it. These people read

those wonderful promises, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," and "ye shall receive power," and then wonder why they are so meaningless in their lives. They forget that both of these promises were given in connection with a definite command: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations . . . and lo, I am with you. . . ." and "Ye shall receive power . . . and ye shall be my witnesses . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth." All the great promises of the Bible are conditional, and these are not exceptions. People who have done next to nothing for the extension of the Kingdom of God need not be surprised when they fail to get out of their religion what those who have been faithful get out of theirs. Nominal Church membership carries with it no blessings; it pays no heavenly dividends. And people whose conception of Christianity is limited to that of a way in which they can somehow manage to get to heaven when they die, may be sadly disappointed at the end of the day. Instead of Jesus saying "Lo, I am with you," it is just possible that He may say, as Matthew pictures Him saying in the great judgment scene, "Lo, I never knew you." All this is true for a Church. No Church that ignores the Great Commission can hope to have the presence of the Living Christ as the inspiration of its life and the Holy Spirit as the source of its power. We cannot do what the Pentecost Christians did

unless we are willing to pay the price which they paid. It costs, and it costs a lot, to be Christians with a vision of the world-task of our religion.

The late Bishop Chas. D. Williams in his "The Prophetic Ministry for To-day" tells of a visit to one of the great English cathedrals:

"Some twelve or thirteen years ago I made my first visit to Winchester Cathedral, England. Those who have seen it know that it is one of the most impressive structures in Great Britain, and indeed in Europe. Huge, low-lying, massive, it looks as solid and enduring as the everlasting hills that surround it on every side.

"But just before my visit, ominous cracks and fissures had been discovered in its walls. The whole structure was threatened with imminent collapse. Expert engineers and architects were called into consultation. The more superficial and facile recommended certain makeshifts only—props here, and flying buttresses there, to shore up the bulging walls, tie-rods and girdles to bind them together.

"But fortunately there was called in a radical, in the best sense of that much-abused word—one who went to the root of things, and whose motto was 'thorough.' He sank deep shafts beside the walls, down beneath the lowest strata of the foundations. And he found that the whole cathedral had been set upon an underlying bog, or swamp. The early builders had flung trunks and boughs of trees into this morass and upon them confidently laid their foundations. But gradually through the centuries the water

from the surrounding hills had seeped into this cup-like valley and turned the swamp into a veritable lake. The situation demanded radical remedies. And I saw men in deep-sea diving suits, with pumps to furnish them air, going down from the dry land into these shafts through the underlying waters, to dig down to the solid clay or rock beneath the foundations and put in great masses of concrete as subfoundations; and now the great structure stands solid and secure."

Anyone who knows our modern life at all is aware of the fact that in the superstructure of Christianity which has been built up through the centuries, grand and beautiful and massive as it is, there are ominous cracks and fissures. Many tell us that the whole structure of our faith is threatened with imminent collapse. And believing all this we have called in our army of experts. We have tried campaigns and drives. We have tried publicity, from the go-to-church-Sunday type to the newspaper and billboard type. We have tried the movie on Sunday night in the Church as a crowd-getter. We have tried a promotional type of evangelism with all its elaborate machinery and show. We have invented all sorts of props to hold up the walls, and all kinds of rods to hold them together. As a last resort we are now appealing to the State Legislatures to pass laws to protect our religion and the Church.

The time has come to try the only remedy that can

really cure. The trouble with Christianity to-day is not so much in the superstructure as in the foundations. We have dug a few shafts, due to the efforts of a few religious radicals who are not satisfied with things as they are; and when we have gone beneath the surface we have discovered that the men who laid the foundations of our present superstructure of Christianity, laid them upon some very insecure material. The streams of historical criticism and modern science have seeped into these foundations and they are beginning to go to pieces. Our whole traditional and denominational conceptions of Christianity rest upon foundations which cannot stand the test of our modern age. We must go deeper than the philosophy and theology of the Second Century scholars. We must go deeper than Nicea. We must go deeper than the Protestant Reformers went. We must go down to the rock foundation upon which the primitive Church was built, and we must build up from that. We must go back to read again those words, "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

There is much, very much in the present superstructure of Christianity that is vital and important. Perhaps when we have gotten down to the sure foundation, to all outward appearances, our present superstructure will be about the same. But it will be more powerful because it rests upon a sure founda-

tion. We must go back to Pentecost to discover the only foundation upon which Christianity can stand and conquer in our modern world; back to the Jesus of history, who lived; who died; and who lived again. There is no other hope. Here, if anywhere, we have the "living roots of Christianity." Here, if anywhere, we have the power which will make Christianity really effective in applying its principles in "ever-widening circles" to the problems of our modern life.

THE END

DATE DUE

47,937

BT 122 .B78 1928

Bruner, Benjamin Harrison,
1888-

Pentecost: a renewal of
power

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

United Theological Seminary Library
MAIN BT122.B76 1928
Bruner, Benja Pentecost: a renewal of po
3 0645 0002 2312 9